

LIPPINCOTT'S MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

MAY, 1893.

MRS. ROMNEY.

CHAPTER I.

MISS VAUGHAN OF BANKSLAND.

"You are not like Cerberus, three gentlemen at once, are you?"

SHERIDAN.

MRS. ROMNEY again!

It was too provoking! The reiteration was almost offensive; it was becoming intolerable; it was really more than feminine flesh and blood could bear; it was like the scarifying sting of a small blood-thirsty insect, for it raised troublesome and invidious comparisons.

Elsie was not a patient person,—not one of those docile, tractable, lovable people whom it is a delight to train and discipline,—who can be drilled, exercised, and formed according to the teacher's whim and pleasure. She was as shy and wild as an unbroken colt accustomed to the sweet dews and breezes of an upland pasture and ignorant as yet of snaffle and curb and a future master; she was full of tricks and frolics, and not averse to small tempers, that were as brief and gusty as a storm in a teacup; and then, like most girls, she had such a good opinion of herself!

Her engagement was only four-and-twenty hours old, and she was already repenting it; at least—yes, she was almost sure that she repented it; she was out of humor with herself and Oliver; and Mrs. Romney—tiresome Mrs. Romney—was the stumbling-block, the *casus belli*, the apple of discord!

And yet what had Oliver said, after all? He had made two or three harmless remarks. In the first flush of his joy and triumph, when Elsie had yielded her perverse little self to his impassioned pleading, almost his first words had been, "Darling, how pleased Romney will be to hear this!" and then, as though by an after-thought, "and Mrs. Romney." And by and by, "You will like Mrs. Romney,

Elsie; every one likes my sister-in-law, she has such a big, grand nature. There is nothing little about her. I always tell Romney that he is a fortunate fellow to have such a wife."

Well, she had not minded this; she was glad to have such a favorable report of Oliver's sister-in-law; she was curious to hear all about her new connections; so she had questioned him a little closely and anxiously on the subject of Mrs. Romney's good looks; but here he had disappointed her; she could make nothing of his descriptions: no, certainly Oliver was not good at description.

"Is Mrs. Romney handsome?—I always call her Mrs. Romney: I like the name, somehow,—it pleases me better than Catherine. Well, no, not exactly,—no, certainly not," with greater decision of manner. "My taste leans more to brown hair with a ruddy gleam in it, and eyes that are as blue and soft as—well, what am I saying to make you look so shy, Elsie? Ah, we were talking about Mrs. Romney, were we? Well, if you must have it, she is not handsome; she is dark, and her features are irregular, but she has plenty of expression, and she looks uncommonly well in evening dress. She has magnificent arms and hands,—Thorold asked permission to model them for his *Andromache*,—and she is altogether a very graceful sort of person."

"And your brother fell in love with her?"

"Yes," with marked gravity, "Romney fell in love with her." Oliver had a tiresome habit of repeating his words, as though he delighted in them. "Men will do it, you know, and the disease is very catching. Why, even I, the most sedate and stoical of Her Majesty's officers, was not invulnerable to—to—" and here it must be owned that Mrs. Romney dropped rather suddenly out of the conversation; she fell as heavily as a plummet into a well, as Milton says, "The lazy leaden-stepping hours, whose speed is but the heavy plummet's pace;" in fact, she sank like a stone.

But the remark that had incensed Elsie, and that had brought that impatient and very improper exclamation to her lips, "Really, Captain Carfax, I am tired to death of Mrs. Romney before I have seen her!" was this:

"I do hope, dear, that you and Mrs. Romney will be good friends. Her being so many years older is all the better; for, having no mother or sister, you poor child, you must often want a word of advice; and Mrs. Romney is so sensible, and then she has so much more experience!" There was a speech to make to a spoiled heiress,—to Miss Vaughan of Banksland! but it only showed an absolute want of tact on Oliver's part. Certainly Captain Carfax should have known better. For it is a well-known psychological fact, and one that commends itself specially to the female mind, that if a person hitherto unknown be unduly or over-much eulogized and belauded, the auditor at once becomes conscious of secret antagonism and an intense desire to pick holes and find fault with such a piece of perfection, and to view him or her in a bad light. "The white light that beats" upon the throned and sceptred being brings out one's imperfections into stronger relief. If Mrs. Romney were, in her husband's and Oliver's eyes, this paragon of womanhood, this pink and acme of perfection, this chrysolite without

flaw or blemish, then she—Elsie Vaughan—would only seem a very weak, faulty little person, and it behooved her at once to take up sword and spear in her own defence.

The scene, the situation, the accessories of the picture, were simply perfect: an artist might have roved amid the whole thing and laid the foundation of his future success as a R.A., as he painted in the lights and shades of that simple, every-day, and yet wholly idyllic picture. Banksland stood high above the river; in the spring its sloping lawn looked as gay as a ball-room, with its huge horse-chestnut trees loaded with red and white blossoms, and commanded a bewitching view of deep-green meadows, where cranesbill and small yellow rock roses grew, with wild thyme and all manner of dainty herbage; while below, the silver trail of the river gleamed between the trees, with fairy-like sails dotted here and there among the greenery. The sunshine, the blue sky, the red roofs of the boat-houses, and the milky whiteness of geese waddling over the common, gave vivid coloring to the picture; while, in the foreground, the garden at Banksland, Elsie's roses, and her own charming little white-gowned self, her striking personality, and the quiet, languid-looking man stretched at her feet, made up the idyll.

Oliver Carfax was by no means a handsome man; in the opinion of his mother, Lady Carfax, all the beauty of the family had centred in the person of his brother Romney, who was indeed a prince among men, though he had an Englishman's unconsciousness of the fact. If Romney were proud of anything, it was of his keen eye and straight aim and his remarkably good taste in choosing a wife: for the rest, he had plenty of excellent muscle, kept himself in good condition, had a horror of growing stout and of missing a shot, and rather liked to be told that he had a good tailor; men, even the best of them, having their private weakness.

Oliver looked small and pale and a trifle insignificant beside his brother's splendid proportions and magnificent physique; but he had a way with him that people could not overlook. He was a soldier, and he looked the character to the life; and he had no nonsense about him, except a habit of half closing his eyes as though he had weak sight, and a slow, indifferent way of speaking when people were strange to him, that rather aggravated them, because they fancied he was bored and did not like them; and in nine cases out of ten they were right. On Elsie herself he had made a distinctly unfavorable impression. She had seen him for the first time at the Trentham ball: it was the evening of her greatest triumph, for more than one susceptible youth had fallen an easy prey to the young heiress's charm. "An orphan, no encumbrances, and a tidy little fortune of her own,—by Jove! it will just suit me down to the ground: and as for looks, there is not a girl in the place to hold a candle to her; plenty of go, too,—just my sort." These were the inward reflections of more than one young aspirant to Miss Vaughan's favor. Elsie was quite ready to do her part, to smile on them and answer their neat little speeches with the bright intelligence that seemed natural to her: she was outwardly gracious to all her partners, but she preferred the tall handsome ones;

and she was secretly chagrined to find that Captain Carfax had put down his name on her programme for three vales.

Certainly she must own, however, that he danced well, exceedingly well; he had a gliding smoothness of step that suited her to a nicety; but a fair, pale man with half-closed eyes and a quiet drawl that appeared to her a little affected was not to her taste. He seemed half asleep, he was bored, he wanted waking up; she felt inclined to say something rude to him, something that would rouse him from his lethargy, that would make him open his eyes, and—but here Elsie grew suddenly hot, and unturled her fan a little nervously, while she fixed her eyes on a spurred heel before her. She had had a shock; she was just going to open her lips, the first word of the flippant little speech was about to be spoken, when suddenly Captain Carfax's heavy lids had raised themselves of their own accord, and a glance so keen and searching, so full of life, had met hers, that she had become suddenly dumb and confused; and he was speaking, too, with the utmost animation and friendliness: "I knew we should get on awfully; your step just suits mine, Miss Vaughan: shall we have another turn? the last was perfect; if you are not tired,—thanks;" and she was whirled round the room again,—no, not whirled,—that word would hardly convey the smooth firm precision with which Captain Carfax guided her through the maze of dancers; it was the very poetry of motion. He did not say much to her,—Oliver was one who talked by fits and starts,—but somehow his silence was eloquent and pregnant with meaning; a sort of weight attached to his simplest sentences; when he said, later on, "You must have an ice," Elsie somehow felt that that frigid form of refreshment had become an imperative necessity to her. There was quite a crowd round the door when she made her appearance from the cloak-room; she had a bewildering blue hood trimmed with white fur that dazzled the young men's eyes; a blue hood ever after seemed to them the loveliest article of feminine attire that they had ever seen. "There is rather a deep step; let me assist you," and Captain Carfax was by her side; no one had seen him push his way to the front; yet a moment before he had been in the hall. Elsie could have declared that her fan had been in her hand when she left the cloak-room; it was one she greatly prized, for it had belonged to her mother; the loss took away all the pleasure of a successful evening, and she laid down her programme and her gloves on her toilet table with a sense that Solomon was right after all, and that all was vanity and vexation of spirit; and there was certainly a suspicion of moisture in her bright eyes as she arrived at this lugubrious conclusion. Her delight was unbounded, then, when the next afternoon, just as Morgan was setting the tea-table, Captain Carfax was announced, and she saw him entering her drawing-room with the fan in his hand; his moustache twitched a little as he heard her exclaim, "Oh, the dear thing! how good of you to bring it, Captain Carfax! Where did you find it? Did I drop it in the hall or on the steps, or did I leave it in the cloak-room?" Elsie remembered afterwards that none of these questions had been answered: the finding of the fan remained a mystery, until, months afterwards, Oliver informed her that he had quietly taken it out of

her hand as she was getting into the carriage. "I wanted a pretext for calling. It was rather a clever device, eh, Elsie?"

"No, sir, it was nothing of the kind!" she returned, indignantly; "it was an infamous robbery: you stole my fan; and I cried—I actually cried—over the loss."

"Oh, come, now, no exaggeration; exchange is no robbery,—I learned that in the nursery: if I stole your fan, you had stolen my heart already; it was love at first sight; when I wrote my name in your programme I knew it was all up with your humble servant."

Elsie never knew why she had accepted Captain Carfax, which she did quite meekly the moment he asked her; she told him afterwards rather crossly that he had given her no chance,—metaphorically, he had carried her off her feet.

"I did not in the least wish to be engaged," she remarked, thoughtfully, as he was about to bid her good-night that evening, and her tone was a little reproachful; the spoiled child had always been used to speak her mind on every occasion.

Oliver had risen, but he sat down again and caressed his moustache: it was not much of a moustache, being sandy in color and a trifle wiry. "No, I suppose not," he observed, after an interval of silence.

"You put too strong a pressure on me. I always told Uncle George"—Uncle George was Elsie's guardian and sole relative—"that I never intended to be engaged until I was three-and-twenty."

"Ah, we often make a false shot," he returned, cheerfully. "I once told Romney that I was cut out for an old bachelor, but he did not believe me: so we were both wrong, you see. You will find it awfully jolly, being engaged, when you once get used to it; I like it already." And with this he took his leave. Elsie made up her mind that she would send him a note the next morning releasing him from his engagement. "I promised too quickly," she thought of saying; "I should prefer to have my three years of freedom, after all;" but she somehow lacked courage to send the note; but, being an impulsive girl, she showed it to him when he came, just to see how he took it; but he only read it and screwed it up in his hand smiling, and went on with the conversation. He hoped Romney would ask him to take her down to the Frythe; he would have a month's leave of absence in June, and it would be capital sport driving her in Romney's dog-cart or riding with her about Fordham; and he drew such a pleasant description of the Frythe and Fordham that Elsie quite longed for the invitation, and the talk flowed on smoothly until Oliver's injudicious speech about Mrs. Romney awoke her smouldering ire.

"I am quite sure that I shall detest Mrs. Romney."

Elsie looked provokingly pretty as she made this speech; the sunshine was in her eyes, and she had contrived a screen with Oliver's hat, the truth being that he had offered it to her for the purpose. "My object in life is to get sunburnt," he assured her, solemnly, as she looked apologetically at his closely-cropped head: his hair looked almost bleached in the sunshine: a phrenologist, however, would have been profoundly satisfied with the shape and formation, the bumps of

concentrativeness, cautiousness, firmness, and benevolence being well developed.

Oliver had a pebble in his hand; the gravel path was behind him and offered him a store of small missiles; he had made up his mind to hit a knob of wood in a garden chair at some distance. When Elsie had uttered her fractious little speech, he took aim, and the pebble grazed the knob.

"Good," he observed, briefly, and his tone showed self-satisfaction; then he turned lightly on his side and took Elsie's hand.

"You are very young, dear," he said, in an amused tone, "but you will grow older and wiser every year. I rather admire your down-right speeches, they are so thoroughly honest. Poor Mrs. Romney! well, I will not say any more about her just now; she shall plead her own cause."

Oliver was really behaving very generously, but he had only been engaged twenty-four hours, and he was far too happy to quarrel with his *fiancée*; he was more in love with Elsie than the girl knew or even guessed; she had not the faintest notion of the real nature of the man to whom she had plighted her troth,—of his depth of character, and his strong tenacity of purpose; his manner was misleading, his assumed languor hid him like a mask. Captain Carfax did not always choose to be understood: he had not yet willed to reveal himself to his young betrothed. But in spite of his generosity Elsie felt herself aggrieved. Miss Vaughan of Banksland was an important person. She did not want to be forgiven and patted on the head like a naughty little girl, so she said, severely, "You talk so much of Mrs. Romney, and so little of your mother. I am more anxious to see Lady Carfax. Miss Dalton told me that she is very handsome."

"She is a good-looking woman," he returned, quietly. "You know my father is an invalid, Elsie, and my mother devotes herself to him; that is why Romney lives at the Frythe, instead of having a house of his own, that he may be at hand to manage everything: the house is so big, and my mother wished it. She and my father have the east wing to themselves."

"I wonder Mrs. Romney likes such an arrangement," observed Elsie, a little disdainfully. If Oliver had asked her to live with his parents—well, she would have had but one answer to that.

"Mrs. Romney is one who never consults her own wishes," returned Oliver, gravely. "Romney said that it was his duty to consider his parents, and that he would like to live at the Frythe, so she said at once that she wished it too. Now, then, shall I take you for a row on the river?" but he seemed so sure of Elsie's consent that he jumped up from the grass and shook himself, as though to prepare for action. Elsie half thought of saying, "No," by way of testing her power, but she changed her mind, and arrayed herself instead in a smart boating-dress, and a sailor hat that suited her to perfection, and they spent the rest of the afternoon among the swans and sedges.

CHAPTER II.

CAPTAIN CARFAX HAS HIS WAY.

MUR. We are men, my liege.

MAC. Ay, in the catalogue ye go for men.

Macbeth.

ONE lovely afternoon in June, when every winged creature great or small was doing its little best to swell creation's mighty symphony, its "*Lieder ohne Worte*," as some one has said, and all young things were gambolling on the earth out of mere wantonness and exuberance of life, Elsie Vaughan sat in the corner of a first-class compartment bemoaning her hard fate with silent bitterness and self-pity, and deriving an immense though morbid pleasure from the process.

Elsie was perusing her own feelings and prospects with the same concentration of industry with which Captain Carfax was seemingly studying his *Times*; but she was too engrossed with her own thoughts to notice sundry keen and amused glances levelled in her direction. When Elsie looked at Oliver, which she did occasionally, rather haughtily and with a touch of defiance, he was always engrossed in his leader, and presented a blank and expressionless visage. At such moments Oliver looked decidedly plain. Elsie considered herself the most miserable of girls, because she had been engaged three whole weeks, and had not yet made up her mind whether she liked or detested her bonds, and was now on her way to be interviewed by Oliver's relatives. Being a shy little mortal, in spite of her conceit, Elsie was in a state of nervous collapse,—the thought of Mrs. Romney being the sole irritant. She was more than ever determined that Mrs. Romney would be her *bête noire*, the wolf in sheep's clothing who would ruin all her pleasure at Fordham. Elsie had come to the conclusion that an engaged person resembled a bird with its wings clipped; her flights were curtailed and regulated by a masculine will: Miss Vaughan had at times a humiliating consciousness that she had found her master. Now and then she felt as though she almost hated this quiet smooth-tongued man who made her pretty speeches and told her that she was young. As Elsie was nineteen, she objected to be considered young; besides which, Oliver was only five-and-twenty,—which proved he was not a Methuselah,—and ought not to give himself airs. But on the whole she respected him, and her hatred must have been in embryo, as they had enjoyed a good deal of boating together during his brief visits to Banksland, and his letters had been eagerly read and answered with a great deal of painstaking care, the slightest erasure necessitating a clean copy. How tenderly Captain Carfax had laid aside these neat girlish epistles, with their faint fragrance of rose-leaves, their formal beginnings and small stilted sentences, and the rush of words at the end! Elsie's postscript resembled herself, and revealed her meaning with blunt honesty. When she told Oliver that she was not sure that she wanted to see him, that she was quite happy with Uncle George, but that he might come if he liked, she meant every word she said, and Oliver believed her, but he came all the same, and made himself so agreeable that she was sorry when he returned to

Aldershot. Elsie hardly knew how Oliver managed her, but she was conscious that she was managed: the idea fretted her at times and brought on one of her contradictory humors. On one or two occasions she had behaved very badly to her *fiancé*, but he had never seemed to notice it; once the snub had been publicly administered, and her chaperon, Mrs. Fielding, had given her a sharp reprimand; for she was a determined sort of person and had known Elsie's mother. "How could you treat Captain Carfax so rudely, Elsie? I was quite ashamed of you. You are far too old to sulk like a baby," she had said, so severely that Elsie had first quarrelled with her and had then burst into tears, and in the end had begged Oliver's pardon. Perhaps her worst punishment was the way Oliver received her apology.

"There is no need of this between you and me, darling," he had said, quietly. "I understand you better than you do yourself. But don't try it on at the Frythe, or my mother and Mrs. Romney will think you younger than you are." Self-command is learned later in life; it was in this way Oliver took his revenge. For a day and a half Elsie went about her own house like a whipped kitten, and Captain Carfax and Mrs. Fielding exchanged glances. Oliver knew that the object of his idolatry was only a child woman, and had not grown into her full stature of womanhood; but nothing could exceed his reverence. She was crude, airified, and full of whimsies, but then, as he told Mrs. Romney, her mother had died before Elsie was eight years old. "Mr. Brudenell—Uncle George, as she calls him—is an old bachelor, and does not understand girls; and Mrs. Fielding, good creature as she is and devoted to Elsie, is only a married old maid. Ask Romney what I mean by that, if you do not understand me." But Mrs. Romney thought that she understood Oliver's meaning very well, and put down his letter with a stifled sigh.

"Men of Oliver's calibre like to educate their wives, at least discipline them, before they marry them," she said later on to her husband as they discussed the letter, as they discussed most things, in Romney's smoking-room. "A full-fledged wife would not suit him at all. She is more a child than a woman; I can read that between the lines; but Oliver will love her all the better for the trouble she gives him. Oliver is a Carfax." And somehow the last few words were as soft as a caress.

"I always said you were the cleverest woman I ever knew, Catherine," returned her husband, admiringly. "You ought to have married Oliver, for as far as cleverness goes you two are a match: Oliver, confound the fellow's impudence, has more brains in his little finger than I have in my whole body." But, as usual when Romney made these humble speeches, his wife only looked at him with worshipping eyes: he was a king among men, and yet his Kitty, as he loved to call her, satisfied him.

Elsie's great fault in Captain Carfax's eyes was that she was an heiress; this was a serious blemish, and nearly prevented him from proposing to her; but he learned two or three proverbs by heart, such as "Gold is dross," "Manners maky the man," "Faint heart ne'er won fair lady," and a few others; and when he felt his pride was suffi-

ciently well nourished, and Elsie's filthy lucre had shrunk to its right proportions in the scale of the universe, he made tracks, as the people say, and his chariot-wheels ceased to drive heavily.

So much in life depends on one's own philosophy. If Diogenes had been thin-skinned, and had cared more for people's opinion than for his own stoicism, he would hardly have lived in a tub with contented equanimity: and even Simeon Stylites, unsupported by a supernatural love of asceticism and maceration, might have repented and bemoaned himself on his pillar. No one could long look dignified in the pillory, even before the rotten eggs appeared; dignity requires the use of the limbs, or at least the free carriage of the head. Marcus Aurelius Antoninus remarks somewhat pithily, "Constantly, and, if it be possible, on the occasion of every impression on the soul, apply to it the principles of Physic, of Ethic, and of Dialectic." This is vague, at least to the feminine understanding; he is better where he says, "No man will hinder thee from living according to the reason of thy own nature: nothing will happen to thee contrary to the reason of the universal nature."

Captain Carfax's bumps or rather organs of acquisitiveness and firmness being unusually prominent, nothing, humanly speaking, could hinder him from making love to the young heiress; and as Oliver generally succeeded when he gave his mind to a thing, Elsie's chances of escape were nil.

He was admiring her with all his heart at that moment. If she looked so pretty in the dumps, he was the luckiest fellow in the world; for of course every woman had her little tempers, and so long as she did not look ugly or sour, and the temper was not of the sullen or vindictive kind, he thought he could put up with it; but when Elsie's mouth drooped at the corners in that irresistible way, his stoicism, albeit of the Diogenes or Simeon Stylites sort, vanished in a moment. He was absurd, he was a fool, but he could not bear the child to look unhappy, and so—and so—but any lover over age could predict exactly how Oliver would act, and what he would say.

"Do you feel better now, darling,—just a tiny bit happier?"

"Yes—oh! I don't know," and then, clasping her little gray-gloved hands, which had somehow got mixed up with Oliver's, she continued rather hysterically, "but I have been so dreadfully unhappy,—and you did not care."

"How do you know? Were you looking at me?" Oliver put this atrocious question quite calmly, but Elsie flamed up in a moment:

"No, of course not. Why should I look at you, when you have made me so miserable? I never wanted to come to Fordham; you ought not to have asked me to do such a thing; no girl ought to be put in such a position; and I have been crying. What will Mrs. Romney think of me? Oh, if I were only safe with Uncle George and Aunt Minnie!"—this being Mrs. Fielding's *sobriquet*; and here Elsie dabbed her face with a small modicum of French cambric that she called a handkerchief.

"You poor little tired child," was Oliver's caressing answer, "don't be afraid of Mrs. Romney: she will be very good to you, every one

will be good to you, first for my sake and then for your own. Why," continued Oliver, keeping the *bonne bouche* for the last, "they will fall in love with you the moment they see you; no one could help it," finished the artful young man, as Elsie bridled and a little rose-leaf flush came into her pale cheeks.

"Oh, do you think so?" she gasped, but she never completed her sentence, for, with Oliver still holding her hand as though he had a right to do it, the train suddenly slackened, and a voice that sounded wonderfully familiar said, "Here they are, Kitty, first-class too, and I have won my bet," and the handsomest man she had ever seen in her life was waving a straw hat with a white ribbon around it.

Oliver took it very coolly: he never even dropped Elsie's hand, but the motion of his elbow gave him the appearance of helping her to rise.

"Actually Romney has put in an appearance! How are you, old man? Pretty fit? That's right.—Elsie, this is my big brother, who used to bully me when I was a small boy: people take us for twins now." But here Oliver found himself unceremoniously pushed out of the way.

"Don't listen to him, Miss Vaughan; he was always a precocious little beggar, and told no end of fibs. Well, I am delighted to see you. Where is that wife of mine? Catherine! Kitty! What has happened to the woman? she seems in a fix."

Mrs. Romney was certainly in a fix; she had been following her husband, pressing towards the railway-carriage, when she became entangled with a lady, a boy, and a dog: the lady was leading the dog, a small unhappy-looking pug, and the chain had caught Mrs. Romney's jacket-button; the boy, who was carrying cakes and butter-scotch, collided with them both, and the cakes strewed the platform. Mrs. Romney, who had a kind heart, and was touched by the lad's piteous dismay, had stopped to make herself useful, and all but one piece of butter-scotch had been replaced on the tray. Then she gathered herself up, smiling, and kissed Elsie before every one.

"How nice of you to come! Oliver was a good boy to bring you. We are all going to spoil you dreadfully.—Romney, I can hear Jess is fidgeting. Has Scott collected the luggage?—Oliver, please put Elsie into the wagonette; Romney is going to drive. I must just see if my cake-boy is quite happy in his mind."

"Awfully stiff and conventional, isn't she?" whispered Oliver, as he helped Elsie into the wagonette, and then he went in search of his sister-in-law. The Squire had gathered up the reins, and was looking complacently at the broad brown backs of the handsome pair of horses before him, then he flicked a fly off Jess's left ear. Elsie was too shy to address him; she had never seen such a magnificent man in her life: she was relieved when she saw Oliver and Mrs. Romney hurrying up to them. Mrs. Romney was flushed and out of breath.

"So sorry to keep you waiting, dear, but accidents will happen. A child fell down, and we had to pick her up and console her with some chocolate: such a dear little mite!—Are you quite comfortable in that corner, Elsie? You see I do not mean to be formal. Don't

trouble to talk if you're too tired; I hate people to talk to me when I am tired; and I have a hundred things to say to Oliver: we are tremendous cronies, he and I." And Mrs. Romney beamed on her brother-in-law.

Elsie was thankful to be left in peace for a few moments: her ideas wanted readjusting. This was not the Mrs. Romney she had been picturing to herself, the "graceful sort of person" who was Oliver's paragon, this talkative young woman in an old gray dust-cloak and an unbecoming hat, a hat that quite hid the smooth dark hair and broad forehead. Certainly Mrs. Romney was not handsome, not even pretty; one could almost call her plain. She had a frank mouth and a pleasant voice, but she talked so dreadfully fast and seemed to manage everybody. How could such a handsome man fall in love with such a plain woman? Then she remembered the arms and hands that had been modelled for Andromache, and felt that her criticism was a little premature; no one could look well in an old gray dust-cloak.

"Is this Fordham?" she asked, by way of making herself agreeable. Oliver would like to hear her talk: she must summon up courage and introduce a subject.

Mrs. Romney was ready with her answer in a moment: "Good gracious, no, child: Fordham is a village. This is Draycott, our county town. We have a railway-station, but there are so few suitable trains that my husband thought it would be better to drive from Draycott. Are you fond of the country, Elsie? Can you make yourself happy in a small quiet place? there will be little to amuse you, I fear. At Dene you had the river and boating. Ah, I know Dene well, and it is near London. Fordham will seem quite dead-and-alive after Dene."

"Oh, no, I love the country," returned Elsie, eagerly; but just then, just as she was getting into the swing of conversation, when the ice was beginning to break between her and the formidable Mrs. Romney, the Squire's voice was heard peremptorily ordering Kitty to look sharp and be ready to bow to the Ferards, and a barouche full of smiling nodding young women passed them, and four pairs of inquisitive eyes looked full at Elsie.

"Some neighbors of ours, who live at Castlebank. Romney is devoted to Laura Ferard: aren't you, Romney? What am I to look at next, dear?" for the Squire was signalling vigorously while he gave Jess a cut with the whip for her bad behavior in shying at a tinker's brazier. "Oh, I understand.—Elsie, do you see this gentleman who is following us in the dog-cart and who is trying to overtake us if Romney will let him? This is our next neighbor, Mr. Lockhart: he lives in a pretty little cottage called 'The Hut.'"

"Rab Lockhart is a character," put in Oliver. "Shall we enlighten her, Mrs. Romney, or shall we allow her to find out Rab for herself? Halloo! Black Madge has bolted. Rab means mischief. Hold hard, Romney, old fellow: don't let the browns get excited, or we shall all land in the ditch." And, thus admonished, the Squire reined in his horses.

"I always said Black Madge had the devil in her," shouted Mr.

Lockhart in rather a shrill voice as the dog-cart came alongside the wagonette. "The top of the morning to you, Squire; your humble servant, Mrs. Romney; ah, my friend the Captain—and——" here the triumphant Jehu ceased waving his white hat, and stared hard at Elsie. Mrs. Romney and Oliver exchanged looks, but neither spoke. A close observer would have suggested that both were bent on mischief. The Squire frowned, and drove on in rather a testy manner. Mr. Lockhart, who seemed waiting for an introduction, jerked his reins as a hint to Black Madge, and continued staring.

Elsie felt inclined to laugh, he was such a droll-looking little man; his bald head as he raised his hat was as bare as an ivory ball, save for the fringe of tow-colored hair which with a small stubbly moustache was his only hirsute ornament. He was small of stature, and his face was as round and chubby as a boy's, and had a shining polished look as though soap as well as water were freely used. His gray overcoat, white waistcoat, and large hothouse flower proved that Mr. Lockhart took care of his outer man. Elsie began to feel the persistent gaze of his prominent light blue eyes somewhat oppressive; she drew herself up and made a remark to Oliver.

"How far have we to go?" she asked, but, to her annoyance, Mr. Lockhart answered her:

"How far, Miss—humph, I beg your pardon, but I did not catch your name," meaningly,—a dead silence on Oliver's and Mrs. Romney's part; then, in a baffled and humble manner, "We are only a mile from Fordham; we have just passed the last milestone. We shall be in the Frythe in another quarter of an hour, Miss—humph-humph."

CHAPTER III.

AN ORDEAL.

Yet do I fear thy nature:

It is too full of the milk of human kindness.

Macbeth.

"My name——" began Elsie, haughtily, but just at that moment Mrs. Romney begged her in an excited manner to look behind her at the funny little litter of black pigs in an orchard they were passing. "Do look at them; they cannot be more than three days old. Did you ever see such darling black infants?"

"I am thinking of buying one of them," observed Mr. Lockhart. "Do you like roast sucking-pig, Mrs. Romney?" And as that lady made a gesture of disgust, he continued in a persuasive manner to Elsie, "I have no pig-sty at The Hut; it is a great mistake; but I am intending to build one. Perhaps, Miss—humph-humph—when you and Mrs. Romney do me the honor of a little visit you will allow me to point out the site—— Eh, what, Squire?"

"You might have invited me, Rab," returned the Squire, quite restored to good humor, and entering into the joke. "I never allow Mrs. Romney to go anywhere without me, for fear of her getting into

mischievous. You are not a safe man, Rab: a gay young spark and lady-killer like you—no; no; I could not trust Mrs. Romney.”

The little man looked delighted at this chaff; he rubbed his hands together, bringing his whip into such smart collision with his face that the lash stung him. “You are jesting, Squire. It is just the Squire’s fun, isn’t it, captain? Not trust Mrs. Romney! Ha ha! We know better, don’t we, madam? How about that meeting over at Draycott at eight o’clock on Thursday evening?”

“How about the inventions of you gentlemen?” returned Mrs. Romney, with a light laugh. “Romney, dear, please do not let the horses go to sleep. Whitefoot is so dreadfully lazy. You must tell Scott to dock his oats: he is growing fat.”

“Fat!” returned the Squire, irritably, for this was touching him on a sore place. “What on earth do you mean, Catherine? Whitefoot is in splendid condition. Look at his glossy coat; and as for the pace,—why, that mare of Lockhart’s is all in a fret and a foam with keeping up with us. But there is no pleasing you women.”

“No, dear, we are troublesome creatures,” continued Mrs. Romney, gently; then she stood up in the wagonette, and, steadying herself by laying a hand on her husband’s shoulder, whispered something to him that must have been conciliatory, to judge from his pleased expression.

“None of your blarney, Kitty,” they heard him say, and then Mrs. Romney laughed and sat down again, but Elsie thought she looked suddenly very tired.

The dog-cart had dropped behind a moment, as a cart was approaching them, and Elsie, relieved from the admiring gaze of the prominent blue eyes, began to take note of her surroundings. They had just passed a beautiful church and churchyard, and were driving through a trim, bright-looking village. Elsie had a rapid impression of cream-colored cottages with gardens full of roses and tall blue delphiniums and masses of gray and mauve campanulas; the air was perfumed with honeysuckles and roses, and as they passed the school-house a small round-faced child in a big white sun-bonnet toddled after the wagonette with a large nosegay of honeysuckles and dark-red clover in her hand.

“For dear ma’ams,” she gasped, and would have been under the hoofs of Black Madge the next moment, had not Oliver leaned over the wagonette and dexterously hitched up the little one by her petticoats. No one could tell how he did it. Mrs. Romney bit her lips to keep in a shriek, and watched him with paling face, while Black Madge snorted and reared; and then Oliver, breathing hard, sat down again, with the child in his arms. The Squire had stopped his horses at Elsie’s exclamation, and was waiting for an explanation, but no one gave it to him. Mrs. Romney was on her knees, kissing the child, and crying over the flowers, and Oliver sat languidly fanning himself. Elsie, in spite of her dislike to public demonstration, caught his hand in passing, and gave it a little squeeze.

“Oh, Oliver, how splendid!”

“Wasn’t it, Miss—humph-humph!” exclaimed Mr. Lockhart, with a chuckle. “Never saw such a thing in my life. The captain

might have spent his life in picking up children ; quite a practised hand, so cool and collected. Gave you a bit of strain, though." But Oliver shook his head ; he was pushing back little Jenny's sun-bonnet to see her curls, a liberty which Jenny, true to her sex, resented. "Don't want gentlemen. I dot the f'owers for dear ma'ams ;" but she ceased struggling, and nestled contentedly up to Mrs. Romney.

"Scene number three," observed the Squire, phlegmatically, when Jenny was safely delivered into her mother's keeping. "I never saw a woman with such a taste for brats as Kitty has. I have seen her kiss even the dirty ones," he continued confidentially to no one in particular.

They had gone through the length and breadth of Fordham, and were just passing a little stream bordered by hart's-tongue ferns and large ox-eyed daisies, when a substantial red brick house with a high-walled garden, and an old clock in the middle of the building, came in view ; a groom was at the gate watching for them, and the next minute they were driving up a broad gravel sweep to the entrance.

"Welcome to Frythe, Miss Vaughan," exclaimed the Squire as he threw down the reins, but his wife said, softly, "You must call her Elsie, Romney, and then she will feel herself at home," and Oliver remarked under his breath, "Hear, hear."

"We shall find Gran and Sir Henry in the drawing-room," observed Mrs. Romney as she led the way through the wide, handsome hall, with its high carved mantel-piece and oak settles, down a corridor full of flowering plants.

"Gran generally has tea in the east wing," observed Mrs. Romney, "but she said that they must be in the drawing-room to welcome you this afternoon. You know, of course, that poor Sir Henry is a sad invalid?"

"Oliver told me so," returned Elsie, with a relapse into shyness. She wanted to stop and look out of the window ; some peacocks were sunning themselves on the terrace among the roses ; a smooth green lawn led to the edge of a small lake, with a delightful clump of trees underneath which some rare water-fowl were disporting themselves : it all looked so peaceful and beautiful. But Mrs. Romney put her hand through the girl's arm and hurried her on.

"We had better get the introductions over," she said, with a smile. "Gran is a little formidable until you get used to her, but she is a dear woman, and one soon gets accustomed to her dignified ways."

As Mrs. Romney spoke, they entered a sunny little anteroom with an arched door-way leading into the drawing-room.

Elsie thought it a charming room, it was full of such delightful nooks and corners. One deep bay-window had a circular cushioned seat, and another was furnished with a low tea-table and cosey-looking chairs. A stately-looking woman with fine aristocratic features and gray curls piled on her forehead after the prevailing fashion was sitting knitting beside her husband's invalid-chair. Sir Henry was a thin, nervous-looking man, many years older than his wife : in his youth he had been handsome, and even now, in his moments of comparative ease from the painful complaint that was slowly bringing him to the

grave, he showed himself a polished and cultured gentleman, though the record of suffering was plainly stamped on his wan face; and there was latent irritability in his pale-blue eyes.

In her earlier days Lady Carfax had been a brilliant and worldly woman, but her husband's affliction had subdued her, and for some years she had simply devoted herself to him.

She rose a little formally to receive her son's *fiancée*, but before Oliver, who was following them, could speak, Mrs. Romney's frank, cheerful voice was again heard:

"Here we are, Gran, punctual to a moment; and you must be very kind to this poor child, for she is tired out with all the strangeness."

"I hope that Oliver's belongings will not long be strange to you, my dear," returned Lady Carfax, kissing her with calm sedateness, and then Sir Henry held out a cold, shaking hand.

"We are very pleased to see you," he said, with old-fashioned courtesy. "We are quiet people for young folk. I am a sad invalid, as you see, but Lady Carfax takes great care of me.—Oliver, my boy, will you just wheel me out of the sun?—Sit down, young lady, and make yourself comfortable. Catherine will look after you; she likes looking after people."

"Yes, dear Sir Henry, so I do." And Mrs. Romney passed her hand caressingly over the wrinkled forehead as she passed his chair. "Now, Gran, I am going to give you some tea.—Elsie, take this little chair beside me, and Oliver will wait on you." And as Elsie gratefully slid into the little sheltered nook assigned her, she almost envied Mrs. Romney her power of putting people at their ease.

"How does she do it?" thought Elsie, when ten minutes had elapsed and she found herself listening to an animated discussion between Mrs. Romney and her mother-in-law on some purchases she had made that afternoon. She was even inveigled into giving her opinion on the merits of art serges, though she was a little frightened when she discovered that Lady Carfax differed from her. "I am too old-fashioned to share your modern taste, my dear," she said, with a sort of gentle contempt in her voice. "Catherine is always telling me how old-fashioned I am: are you not, my love?"

"Yes, Gran, and you take all my rude speeches with the patience of an angel.—Elsie, this mother-in-law of mine has the sweetest temper in the world; but you will soon find this out for yourself.—Does any one know what Romney is doing with himself?—Ah, there you are, my lord and master," as the Squire entered, and Sir Henry's face brightened perceptibly.

"How are you, father?" he asked, as he took his cup of tea from his wife's hand. "We don't often see you on this side of the house; but I suppose it is in Miss Vaughan's honor.—Ah! I see Kitty has taken you under her wing, Miss Vaughan; she always does that sort of thing.—Do you remember, mother, when I introduced Kitty to you, under the same sort of circumstances? it was three years ago, eh, Kitty?" And a blush came to Mrs. Romney's cheek.

"Only three years? It seems longer," she said, dreamily.

"You are paying my son a poor compliment, Catherine," returned

Lady Carfax, with a smile; "but we understand her: do we not, Romney?" And the Squire laughed.

"Kitty is very Irish at times, but I have learned to translate her speeches." And Mrs. Romney, who had seemed a little abstracted, roused herself at her husband's speech.

"I only meant that three years seemed too short to hold so much happiness," she said, with a simplicity that seemed natural to her. "Gran, if you will excuse me, I should like to take Elsie to her room.—Come with me, dear." And, as they left the room together, she said, confidentially,—

"I was so sorry for you, you poor child, you looked so frightened when Gran kissed you. Gran is very imposing, and she makes one feel rather small at times; but you will soon get fond of her. You did not like me at first, did you? but you will find me a very comfortable sort of person." And, after this frank speech, Mrs. Romney pointed out to her the various arrangements for her comfort in the spacious, well-furnished room assigned for her use, and then, commending her to the care of a pleasant-looking young woman who was to act as her maid, Mrs. Romney departed, promising to return presently.

Elsie dressed herself quickly, and then, ignoring Mrs. Romney's request that she would remain quietly in her room and rest until she fetched her, she opened her door, and walked quietly down the corridor. A window-recess at the far end attracted her, but as she passed a half-open door Mrs. Romney's voice called to her: "Is that you, Elsie? Will you come and see my boy?" And as Elsie entered the nursery she heard the little ripple of baby laughter.

For a moment she felt bewildered. Could the voluble lady in the gray dust-cloak be transformed into this graceful-looking woman in black, who was standing in the middle of the room, with the fair-haired blue-eyed child in her arms?

Elsie glanced at her doubtfully, at the white unadorned neck that looked so dazzlingly fair, and at the beautifully-shaped head with its smooth coils of dark hair; and she felt Oliver's description had been correct: Mrs. Romney, in spite of her lack of beauty, was certainly an attractive woman.

"Is not Harry a darling?" she exclaimed, as Elsie kissed the child. "He is exactly like Romney; every one says so; he does not take after his mother at all. How pretty you look, Elsie! You ought always to wear white. I dare say Oliver has told you that, he has such taste. Romney never knows what dress I have on, but Oliver always notices one's clothes: if he takes a dislike to a thing, he never lets you have a moment's peace."

"May I have your boy a moment?" pleaded Elsie; but Harry hid his face on his mother's shoulder, and refused to make friends with Aunt Elsie, in spite of all entreaties.

"But you must not call me that," observed Elsie, in rather a distressed tone. "Suppose Oliver were to hear you."

"Nonsense!" returned Mrs. Romney, vigorously; "my baby boy must be taught to love his aunt. What a delicious child you are, Elsie! you answer exactly to Oliver's description; you have not disappointed

me at all. I am quite fond of you already, and yet you do not care for me a bit; but I shall make you like me; if I try, I can always make people care for me. Oliver says I am a regular witch."

"Oliver is always talking about you. He praises you to the skies." Elsie's tone was slightly dubious. Mrs. Romney, who was rocking her boy gently, gave her a quick comprehending glance.

"I shall tell Oliver that he is a goose. Of course you were prejudiced against me; but you must try and forget all his nonsense and take me on my own merits. I have not been disagreeable to you yet, have I?"

"No, indeed; you have been very kind," returned Elsie, in a conscience-stricken tone; she was sensible all at once of a curious revulsion of feeling; she was not quite so sure that she disliked Mrs. Romney. To get rid of her embarrassment she added, hastily, "I am afraid that I shall never feel at my ease with Lady Carfax."

"Oh, yes, you will," returned Mrs. Romney, with one of the sudden brilliant smiles that seemed to light up her face. "Let me tell you something. Three years ago I went through the same terrible ordeal. I did not see Gran until Romney and I were married," and, as Elsie looked rather surprised at this, she continued, a little hurriedly, "I will tell you all about that some day. My husband's people were not pleased with his choice, and Romney refused to take me to the Frythe until he could introduce me as his wife. You see, Elsie," with a sudden proud curl of her lip, "I was not an heiress like you, and both Sir Henry and Lady Carfax thought that Romney had done very badly for himself in marrying me."

"How dreadful it must have been for you!"

"Well, it was pretty bad. I shall never forget Romney's face as he stood there while Gran made her stiff conventional little speeches: 'Mrs. Romney must be tired; had we suffered from the dust? would I go to my room and rest?' and all the time there was such a lump in my throat that I could scarcely answer."

"And Mr. Romney did not help you?"

"No, dear; he was only vexed with me for my awkwardness; he was so uncomfortable himself, poor fellow, that it made him quite cross. At last I could bear it no longer; I wanted to burst out crying, or run out of the room, but I burst out laughing instead. Oh, how horrified Romney looked! But I think I should have died if I had not laughed, and I said, 'Please, please, do not look at me as though you hated me, for I mean to love you with all my heart, because you are Romney's mother,' and I threw my arms round her, and kissed her as though she had been my own darling mother, and—would you believe it, Elsie?—the dear old thing actually cried, and said that she did not mean to be unkind, and Romney got sweet-tempered in a moment, and petted us and said nice things to us both, and Gran and I sat hand in hand for the rest of the evening: what do you think of that, Elsie? Ah, there is the gong, and I can hear Oliver running up three steps at a time to fetch his lady-love."

CHAPTER IV.

THE FIRST EVENING AT THE FRYTHE.

Small showers last long, but sudden storms are short.

Richard II.

SIR HENRY always took his meals in his own room, and Lady Carfax, who had long ago resigned her place to her daughter-in-law, sat at her son's right hand, while Elsie found herself seated between Mrs. Romney and Oliver.

"I told Romney that we would not stand on ceremony," observed his wife, in a whisper, which was overheard by the Squire's sharp ears, for he remarked, in a discontented tone, as he unfolded his napkin,—

"I wish I had asked Rab to dine with us this evening. It is too bad of you to desert me in this way, Miss Vaughan, and take up with my wife. You will find that Kitty rules us all; even Oliver is under her thumb: so I advise you to look out; you will have no will of your own as long as you are at the Frythe."

"I warn you to take no notice of my son's speech," observed Lady Carfax, in her soft precise manner; "he teases Catherine dreadfully, but you will soon find out for yourself that he can do nothing without her." And she looked affectionately at her daughter-in-law. "We did not want Mr. Lockhart here this evening, did we, Catherine?"

"No, indeed," with energy. "Elsie, I hope you are aware that you have made a conquest: at the risk of making Oliver jealous, I must inform you that poor Rab has lost his heart at first sight."

Elsie looked so mystified at this that there was a general laugh at her expense; but no one enlightened her, until she and Mrs. Romney were taking a turn on the lawn while the gentlemen lighted their cigarettes in the porch, when Mrs. Romney explained the joke:

"I was quite serious when I said poor Rab had lost his heart, Elsie. Rab is a very eccentric character; he is a droll, harmless little man, and we are all very fond of him, for he is the best-natured fellow in the world; but he has a mania for falling in love: to my knowledge he has proposed to three of our guests and has been invariably refused."

"How can he be so absurd?"

"Absurd! there is something pathetic to me in Rab's persevering endeavors to get married. He has a pretty little house, and a good income, and the kindest of natures; but he is so droll-looking, such a bald-headed boy, as Oliver calls him, that no one will have anything to say to him, though I have told Romney over and over again that Rab would make the best husband in the world."

"I thought him very rude to stare at me so," returned Elsie. "Why did you refuse to take his hints? He wanted to find out my name."

"Of course he did, but Oliver and I were bent on playing him a trick. He makes love to all our young lady guests, but he would not venture on such a liberty with Oliver's *fiancée*. Was it not delicious to hear his Miss Humph-humph! Poor Rab, how his face will fall when he hears your name! He wants your advice on the subject of pig-sties, does he not, Elsie?"

"Mr. Lockhart must be very dense not to have understood that you were all laughing at him."

"I don't believe Rab is dense at all. He is quite aware of his own comicality. He makes me his confidante sometimes. He once told me, in a lamentable voice, that he wished he did not look so much like a chubby boy. I could hardly keep my countenance. Grace Carfax, a cousin of my husband, had just refused him most indignantly, and Rab's feelings had been wounded. 'She need not have spurned me as though I were a worm and no man,' he observed, with tears in his eyes."

"I can understand Miss Carfax's indignation," was Elsie's unfeeling observation on this.

"Oh, but I am tender-hearted, and I am sorry for poor little chubby-faced Rab. I will tell you a profound secret, only please do not betray me to my husband or Oliver, or they would circumvent my plan out of sheer malice. I am so sorry for Rab that I am determined to find him a wife, and I think I have some one in my mind who would exactly suit him. There, I will tell you another time, for here come the gentlemen. Elsie, do you mind talking to my husband while I take Oliver away? I have something I want to say to him." Mrs. Romney's manner changed, and she looked so beseechingly at the girl that Elsie could only assent to this.

It was evident that the Squire had no objection to this arrangement. When Elsie begged him to go on smoking he beamed on her, and observed that Oliver was a lucky fellow; and then he proposed a turn round the lake. Elsie chatted to him happily; she was glad that Oliver's brother was such a big, handsome man; he looked so strong, so genial, so thoroughly the contented Englishman, and he had such a happy faith in himself and his own belongings, no wonder his wife adored him.

He began talking about her presently. Belief in the perfections of his Kitty was evidently part of the Squire's creed; her opinions, her cleverness, her management of the boy, were all touched on with enthusiasm.

"My mother thinks that there is no one like her," he observed, presently, "and Oliver agrees with her. By the by, what has become of my wife and Oliver? I caught sight of Kitty's gown between the trees a short time ago. It is getting damp, Miss Vaughan. I propose that we go in."

Elsie agreed to this; her shoes were thin, and the grass was very wet, and the shrubby paths were dark and damp, and she was growing tired; the Squire's pleasant easy flow of conversation ceased to interest her; she wanted to talk to Oliver; she began to feel it strange that he should desert her on this first evening for Mrs. Romney; she had a hundred questions to ask him; for his sake she had been exerting herself and trying to overcome her natural timidity; she longed for a word of commendation and assurance that he was pleased with her, and he was strolling about with Mrs. Romney and taking no notice of her at all. Elsie began to feel a little hurt and resentful. The Squire unwittingly fanned the flame:

"Upon my word, Miss Vaughan,—excuse me, I should have said Elsie,—you ought to keep Oliver in better order. He and Kitty will have to give up their moonlight prowls, now he has a young lady to look after; that wife of mine spoils him dreadfully."

The Squire made this jesting speech without any malice; he secretly delighted in the fact that his wife and his only brother were such great friends; but Elsie's discontent verged on positive discomfort.

It was too bad. She was just beginning to like Mrs. Romney, at least not to dislike her, but if she had the bad taste to monopolize Oliver and to carry him off for hours on her first evening at the Frythe (a bare hour was the limit of Mrs. Romney's audacity), she should certainly disapprove of her. Why, actually the Squire had got tired of entertaining her, and had gone in quest of his paper and a reading-lamp. Lady Carfax had retired to the east wing; and here she was actually left to herself in a strange house. And Elsie's margin of discontent broke boundaries and overflowed into positive resentment. Elsie was unaware that at that moment two dark forms were ascending the grassy slope that led to the terrace, and that they checked their footsteps involuntarily at the sight of the little white figure sitting so disconsolately under the mellow light of the big standard lamp.

"What a pretty picture, Oliver! Is it not a lovely little face? But she looks dull, poor child. Go in and talk to her while I make myself presentable. What a goose I was to cry! If Romney asks for me, tell him I have gone to see Harry."

"Ah, what? are those the truants? Upon my word, Kitty, you are a cool hand! I wonder what Miss Vaughan thinks of your monopoly of Oliver?" And the Squire, with his paper in his hand, suddenly blocked up the window.

"Is that not Harry crying?—please excuse me, dear; I will come back directly," and Mrs. Romney vanished, but not before Elsie's keen girlish eyes had detected that Mrs. Romney's face was flushed and tear-stained and that Oliver's countenance had a grave abstracted expression. Elsie was conscious of sudden irritation; her little white throat swelled for a moment, as though something choked her. "It is very late," she said, hurriedly, "and I am so tired: may I go to bed, please?"

"Of course you are tired," returned the Squire, kindly. "Kitty is not often forgetful of her guests' comfort. She ought to have taken you off with her."

"I will light your candle, Elsie." Oliver spoke with unusual abruptness: he opened the door for her somewhat gravely, but as soon as they were alone together in the dimly-lighted hall his manner changed.

"Are you very angry with me, darling?" he said, trying to detain her, but she broke away from him, and walked a little haughtily to the window, and after a moment's hesitation he followed her.

"I see you are offended with me, Elsie," he said, quietly, "but indeed I could not help myself. Mrs. Romney wanted me to assist her in a little difficulty, but we had no idea that you had been left so long alone. I was quite shocked when I heard the stable clock just now."

"Don't trouble to apologize to me," returned Elsie, coldly: "your

brother was very pleasant and entertaining, and I was very well amused." But Oliver caught her hands, with sudden irritation.

"For heaven's sake, don't take that tone with me, Elsie. Don't you see I am worried enough without that?" Oliver spoke with unusual excitement. Elsie had never seen him so moved before. What had she said? How had she hurt him? Were they quarrelling this first evening? She glanced at him a little timidly.

"It is not my fault that you have been left to yourself so long," he continued, "and you must not blame Mrs. Romney, either. Do you think I ever wish to leave you?" his voice breaking into tenderness. "Elsie, you are all the world to me, but I think you might trust me a little."

"Trust you! Of course I trust you, Oliver. What can you mean?"

"I hardly know what I do mean, darling. Something has put me out this evening, and I am not quite myself. If you knew how I was longing to talk to you! Elsie, promise me never to be offended with me again for such a little thing."

Was it such a little thing? Elsie's conscience pricked her. Oliver had always laughed at her little tempers before; he had never taken them seriously; he looked tired and worried, and—well, after all, Elsie's heart was in the right place, and there was healing enough in that shy kiss, the first she had ever offered him, for any wound, however deep.

So the treaty of peace was signed, and though Oliver's gratitude for favors received was somewhat overwhelming, and he would not allow her to leave him, Elsie felt happier than she had done since she arrived at the Frythe, and she was hardly damped when Oliver told her that he would have to leave her for a few hours the next day.

"It is a great bore," he observed, discontentedly, "for I wanted to take you for a ride; but we will make up for it in the evening."

"Must the business be done, Oliver?"

"I fear it must, dear, as I am taking the dog-cart into Draycott. Mrs. Romney proposes to accompany me, as she has some shopping to do in the town; but I shall ask my mother to drive you somewhere."

Elsie was just going to say, "Could I not go in the dog-cart too?" but she checked herself, for of course Oliver would take the groom. She was sadly disappointed, however; a ride with Oliver would be so delicious, and a drive with Lady Carfax seemed a very formidable sort of function; but she would not worry him by hinting at this. And she had her reward, for Oliver, who could read her thoughts pretty plainly, was giving her well-deserved praise; she was a dear, unselfish child, and he was ever so much obliged to her for falling in with his plans, and after this he consented to light her candle. Elsie had just taken it from him, and had wished him good-night, when the half-open door of the nursery attracted her notice, and when Oliver had left her she put down her candle and peeped in.

Mrs. Romney, still in her evening dress, was in her low rocking-chair, by the window. Her boy was lying half asleep on her lap, while she crooned a soft little lullaby over him, and one bare dimpled arm

was flung round his mother's neck. As Elsie's footsteps lingered by the door, he joined drowsily in the lullaby.

"Hush, my precious: Harry must go to sleep." Then, as she saw the girl standing beside her, she continued, "Is not Harry a naughty boy, to make poor mother take him out of his cot and sing him to sleep?"

"What a darling he is!" returned Elsie, kneeling down beside him. "How you must love him!" But as she made this very natural speech, Mrs. Romney shivered and sighed.

"I tell Romney that I love him too much. Do you know what it is to love so intensely, Elsie, that the feeling almost amounts to pain? Sometimes when I think of my two blessings I am almost afraid of my own happiness. I wonder whether you will ever feel like that with Oliver?"

"I don't know. I fear not."

"You are so very young, dear," returned Mrs. Romney, gently, and with a sudden impulse she put her arm round the girl and drew the brown head to her shoulder, "such a young motherless creature. Thank God that you have got Oliver to take care of you; never be afraid of trusting him, Elsie: he is so true, so strong, and so brave, that no woman need fear to confide her happiness to his keeping. The more you know him, the more you will love him; with the exception of my Romney, I do not know a man to compare with him."

"I know he is good," returned Elsie, softly. Her cheeks glowed at hearing these praises of her lover; she was glad that she had been nice to him this evening.

"Yes, he is good with a man's goodness; that is a very different sort of goodness from ours; we are so weak, even the best of us; we act on impulse and make mistakes." She checked herself and sighed again. "Elsie, take my advice, never be afraid of Oliver; tell him everything, everything; you will never have cause to repent your confidence. Now I am going to lay Harry in his cot. He is fast asleep. Does he not look sweet? My bonny, bonny boy! Go to your room, Elsie, and I will come directly and wish you good-night."

CHAPTER V.

IN CHURCH STREET.

Keep cool, and you command everybody.

ST.-JUST.

ELSIE felt strangely happy as she laid her head on the pillow that night. For the first time since her engagement, she was quite sure of her own feelings; she was beginning to understand Oliver. The remembrance of that little scene of reconciliation in the dimly-lighted hall still thrilled her; Oliver's singular irritability, so foreign to his usual calm languor, his outburst of tenderness, had surprised and touched her; she had never seen him so unlike himself; and yet she had never liked him so well.

As she dressed herself the next morning, she told herself that

nothing should make her offended with Oliver again ; and she felt a shy undefinable pleasure at the idea of seeing him. It was slightly disappointing, then, when she entered the breakfast-room, to find only the Squire and his wife at the table.

They both welcomed her very kindly, but the girl's shrewdness at once guessed that some conjugal argument was on the tapis. Mrs. Romney looked a little flushed and anxious, and there was a shade of discontent on the Squire's brow.

"Am I late, Mrs. Romney ? I believe I overslept myself."

A white muscular hand was stretched over Elsie's shoulder as Oliver sauntered into the room ; the next moment some fragrant dewy roses lay on her plate, but his greeting was almost a silent one, and then he strolled leisurely to the side table and began carving some chicken. Meanwhile, the Squire stirred his coffee and went on with his grievance.

For the first time in their married life Mrs. Romney was contumacious ; she had just informed him that she had some shopping to do in Draycott and that Oliver had offered to drive her in the dog-cart ; and she had actually turned a deaf ear to his hints that the plan had better be given up, as her presence was indispensable to him that morning.

The Squire had some letters to write ; and, as his household knew well, the Squire hated letters. His correspondence was invariably of the briefest description ; and it was an old joke between husband and wife that even the longest of his love-letters during the period of their engagement had scarcely exceeded the first page.

Mrs. Romney generally acted as her husband's secretary ; he found it impossible to arrive at any decision without her ; for how was he to be sure what he meant unless Kitty were at his elbow to jog his memory and put things before him in her clear concise way ? But for once Mrs. Romney was obdurate.

"The letters are not of the slightest importance, dear," she said, gently, for, if the truth were known, it was painful for her to refuse him anything. "Why should any one waste their time in-doors on such a lovely morning ? Gran has promised to take Elsie for a drive. They are going across to Thornborough ; we have arranged that between us ; and you know, Romney, that you meant to ride over to Karslake to give your opinion on Colonel Faucit's new mare."

This was a decided stroke of policy. The Squire had forgotten all about his promise to Colonel Faucit ; he was much obliged to Kitty for reminding him, but he had a notion that one day next week was the time mentioned ; but his wife quietly negatived this. No date had been fixed ; Romney was to ride over on the first opportunity. There was a fresh argument on this point, carried on by the Squire rather seriously, and opposed by his wife in a half-jesting manner. Oliver remained neutral during the discussion, and ate his breakfast in silence. Once the Squire appealed to him : had not Colonel Faucit suggested the following week ? but, though Oliver had answered briefly in the affirmative, Mrs. Romney was not convinced.

What did it matter, she observed, cheerfully, which day Romney went ? Colonel Faucit would be delighted to see him at any time ; they

had so much in common, they had always so much to say to each other, that she never could get in a word. The first fine morning, she was sure the colonel meant; and had not Romney just informed her that the weather was breaking? Here an indignant disclaimer on the Squire's part; he had prophesied a shower or two,—nothing more, he would take his oath of that. But Mrs. Romney only shook her head at him smilingly. She had misunderstood him, she supposed, but all the same his correspondence would keep; she had glanced over his letters before breakfast, and not one of them required an immediate answer except Robert Carpenter's, and they had not made up their minds about that.

"I will think it over and let you know this evening, dear; it is no good deciding in a hurry; Oliver and I will talk it over while we drive into Draycott." But here there was another hitch: the Squire was not sure that the dog-cart could be used. Rufus had gone a little lame, and he meant to speak to the veterinary surgeon about him. Mrs. Romney seemed rather taken aback at this fresh obstacle; but Oliver came unexpectedly to her aid.

"I suppose I could drive Bob," he said, quietly; and, after a little more argument, it was finally decided that Bob should be put into the dog-cart and that the Squire should lock up his letters and ride over to Karslake; and then Mrs. Romney rose from the table with a look of relief.

"I hope you and my mother will get on all right," remarked Oliver, as he and Elsie strolled through the conservatory and he picked her some more roses. "You will not see my father: he is never visible until luncheon. It is hard lines my having to leave you, but it is no use grumbling, and we will make up for it in the evening. I will take you over to the east wing now and leave you in my mother's charge." Oliver's quiet decided tone allowed of no appeal, and Elsie reluctantly accompanied him.

They found Lady Carfax writing letters in a large sunny room with a bay-window looking out over the garden and lake. She received Elsie very graciously, and when Oliver had taken himself off she brought out some photographs and bade the girl amuse herself while she finished her letters, as the carriage would not be round for another hour.

Mrs. Romney came in for a moment by and by to bid them good-by. She wore her old gray dust-cloak, and seemed in a great hurry.

"I hope you and Gran will enjoy your drive, Elsie. Luncheon is always a movable feast at the Frythe. Gran is punctual,—you are always punctual, aren't you, dear?—but Romney and I have a knack of turning up at odd times. Well, adieu, dear friends: Oliver is waiting for me." And she nodded and vanished.

"I don't think Catherine seems in her usual spirits," observed Lady Carfax, as she closed her desk and took up her knitting. "She is the life of the house, generally,—Sir Henry calls her his sunbeam,—but she has been a little quieter lately. Romney noticed it the other evening. I hope you and Catherine will be great friends."

"I hope so too," returned Elsie, demurely.

"That is a pretty gown you have on, my dear," continued Lady Carfax, benignly. "I wish Catherine would take a little more pains with herself: she has a charming figure, and looks so well when she is properly dressed, but she is dreadfully careless about her appearance. I have asked her more than once not to wear that old gray dust-cloak, but she always puts me off with a laugh."

Elsie felt that she agreed with Lady Carfax, but she hardly liked to say so. To her relief, Lady Carfax did not seem to expect an answer. She had good old-fashioned notions on the subject of dress, and her daughter-in-law's disregard of appearances was an old grievance: so she proceeded to air her special views for the benefit of her young auditor:

"No one objects to extravagance more than I do, but we all owe a duty to society. As I often tell Catherine, my eldest son's wife has a position to maintain. I once heard a lady say at the County Ball that Mrs. Romney Carfax was the worst-dressed woman in the room; and yet I had begged and prayed Catherine to get a new dress for the occasion, but she flatly refused to do so."

"Perhaps Mrs. Romney doesn't care to spend her money on dress."

"But, my dear, she ought to care for her husband's sake; but Romney never takes my part in this; in his opinion his wife looks well in anything; he is utterly infatuated about her. He certainly makes her a most handsome allowance: so, as I tell her, her stinginess cannot be justified. Why, she actually told me the other day that she could not afford to buy herself a new cloak! Did you ever hear such nonsense? I often ask Catherine how she spends her money, but I never remember her answering me. She is very soft-hearted, and I expect she just flings it away on a number of worthless cases. She never can refuse a beggar."

"I am afraid I am very selfish and spend a great deal on myself," observed Elsie, regretfully: but Lady Carfax would not allow this: her future daughter-in-law was an heiress, and great latitude must be permitted her: besides, as she carefully pointed out to Elsie, Oliver was not like Romney; his wife's appearance would be a matter of importance to him; and all this was very pleasant doctrine to Elsie.

After this they prepared for their drive, and by and by Elsie found herself chatting quite happily to the formidable Lady Carfax. Lady Carfax seemed anxious to draw her out: she questioned her judiciously about her life at Banksland, and Elsie answered with her usual animation.

Presently Mrs. Romney's name came on the *tapis* again. Elsie wanted to know if her engagement had been a long one.

"No, dear, it was a very short one. Romney was in a hurry to be married." And here Lady Carfax hesitated a moment. "You are one of ourselves, Elsie, and perhaps Oliver has already told you that Catherine was a governess."

Elsie started: she was rather surprised to hear this.

"Romney met her at the 'Traffords': he and Cecil Trafford were great friends, and Romney often stayed at The Firs. I believe he fell in love with her the first time he saw her. Mrs. Trafford told me that

she was never more surprised in her life. Felicia, the eldest daughter, was an exceedingly handsome girl, and it must have seemed strange to her mother that Felicia was passed over and her governess preferred. I don't mind telling you, Elsie, that Sir Henry and I were not at all pleased with our son's choice; though Catherine is now our very dear child, and we would not change her for a dozen Felicias."

"And you did not see her until she was Mrs. Romney?"

"No. Romney was very firm about that. Romney has a strong will, though he seldom exercises it; but when he once makes up his mind it is very difficult to turn him from his purpose. He refused to subject Catherine to such an ordeal. 'You shall see her when she is my wife, mother,' he said to me, 'but not before,' and he kept his word. It was hard on me, was it not, Elsie? Romney was punishing me because I objected to his marriage."

"But you liked Mrs. Romney when you saw her," returned Elsie, who found a strange fascination in the subject.

Lady Carfax smiled as though at some amusing recollection. "I am afraid I shall shock you, but it is an old joke between Catherine and myself, and she often teases me about it: the first moment I saw her I said to myself, 'Can this plain and awkward young woman be my son's choice?' but before the evening was over I quite loved her. 'She is charming, Romney,'—those were my words when I bade him good-night. I can see his pleased look now. Do you know, my dear, when little Harry was born Catherine very nearly died. Romney was almost distracted, and I do not think I ever suffered so much in my life. He was quite haggard with misery. The very doctors were sorry for him. I shall never forget those days." And Lady Carfax shuddered.

"Mrs. Romney, somehow, fascinates me," returned Elsie, slowly. "I was rather prejudiced against her at first, but I see I am mistaken now."

"She certainly endears herself to every one," replied Lady Carfax. "Catherine is so utterly unselfish; she never spares herself if she can give any one pleasure. It was her long walks with Romney that led to the mischief; she never liked to own to him that she was tired, or to ask him to turn back. It was false tenderness, of course, for in the end she caused him great suffering, and I often tell her that it was absurd weakness on her part. 'Suppose you or Harry had died,' I once said to her. But she will never be allowed to expose herself to such risks again. Romney is so careful over her. I think she finds his restrictions a little oppressive: Catherine is such an active person, and really her health is superb, but when Romney takes her out now he is always afraid of tiring her. Catherine gets in quite a pet with him sometimes."

They had reached Thornborough by this time, and Lady Carfax suddenly remembered that she wanted to leave a message with a needle-woman who was doing some plain sewing for her. "It will not take us much longer to drive back by Draycott," she observed, "and it does not matter if we are a little late for luncheon."

When they reached Draycott Lady Carfax directed the coachman

to drive her to Church Street, and when they arrived she prepared to descend from the carriage. "I shall not be long," she observed, "but I know Mrs. Evans wants me to select the trimming. Catherine would have done it for me, but I quite forgot to remind her. I will try not to keep you long waiting."

Elsie made an appropriate answer. She assured Lady Carfax she did not in the least mind waiting; then she leaned back listlessly in the carriage and wondered how people could live in such a dull street; the high narrow houses and their wearisome uniformity oppressed her, and not even the grand tower of Draycott Church at the end of the street could reconcile her to the dulness.

Mrs. Evans's house was made conspicuous by a hanging plant and a canary; a little lower down there was a wire blind and some ugly yellow curtains. How could any one tolerate a wire blind? thought Elsie: and then she started slightly. At an upper window she had caught a momentary glimpse of a face she recognized. It was only for an instant, but Elsie had unusually keen sight, and she was sure it was Mrs. Romney. She had come forward to the window and had immediately drawn back. There had been no sign of recognition at the sight of Elsie and the carriage. A moment later the blind was lowered.

Elsie remained staring at the blind until Lady Carfax returned; but when she mentioned the fact of her seeing Mrs. Romney Lady Carfax smiled a little sceptically. "I think you must be mistaken, my dear. Catherine knows no one in Church Street except Mrs. Evans, and she never employs her. Surely that is Mr. Lockhart, Elsie: no one could mistake him," as the little man approached with a radiant face. He wore a brown velvet coat and knickerbockers, and had an enormous *Maréchal* Niel rose in his button-hole.

"I saw the Carfax liveries," he observed, blandly, "and could not resist coming to speak to you.—Good morning, Miss—Humph-humph," with a beaming smile at Elsie, which faded into utter blankness as Lady Carfax ruthlessly dispelled an illusion:

"I thought you were introduced to Miss Vaughan yesterday. My son Oliver, as you know, is engaged to this young lady."

"I was not aware that I was speaking to Miss Vaughan," returned Mr. Lockhart, ruefully. "I am very sorry—I mean, I am very pleased to make your acquaintance, Miss Vaughan. My friend the captain is a lucky man. I must congratulate him when I see him." And here the little man gave vent to a gusty sigh. "Well, well, I must not keep you, Lady Carfax. I wonder what attraction you ladies find in Church Street. I met Mrs. Romney here the other evening. Well, give my respects to Sir Henry." But he remained as though glued to the curb until the carriage was out of sight.

"Is not that the dog-cart, Elsie, that I see across the market-place?" asked Lady Carfax, suddenly, and Elsie answered in the affirmative. Oliver was driving rapidly out of the town; the groom's seat was empty, and Mrs. Romney was not with him.

CHAPTER VI.

BY THE LAKE-SIDE.

And I will pu' the pink, the emblem o' my dear,
For she's the pink o' womankind, and blooms without a peer.

BURNS.

LADY CARFAX and Elsie had luncheon together, and then Lady Carfax begged the girl to amuse herself until the others returned, as Sir Henry always expected her to read to him in the afternoon. Elsie was not sorry to be left to her own devices. She went in search of a book, and then strolled down the grassy slope towards the little lake. A certain nook had taken her fancy,—a low seat shaded by an acacia. From this seat the house was quite hidden, and only a thick fringe of shrubbery with a narrow winding walk through it skirted the lake round which she and the Squire had paced the preceding evening.

How still and tranquil it looked this afternoon! The rippling surface of the water was flecked by purple shadows; a small fleet of yellow ducklings sailed aimlessly to and fro, while some foreign ducks plumed themselves on the bank, and two majestic swans floated in stately pride with white arching necks and glossy wings outspread in the sunshine.

Elsie's book lay unopened on her lap. She was not a great reader, and how could she read when blue dragon-flies were skimming across the water, and a sudden splash of a water-rat distracted her attention, when blue-tits and green finches darted to and fro among the branches, and the thrush and the blackbird competed like minstrels at a feast?

Elsie fell into a delicious reverie until quick springing steps brought the expectant light to her eyes; and the next moment Oliver was beside her.

"I thought you were never coming back," she observed, reproachfully, as he threw himself at her feet and tossed his straw hat on the grass with the air of a man who feels that he has fairly earned his rest. "What have you done with Mrs. Romney, Oliver?"

"She and Romney are shut up in the library. My dearly beloved brother is in some fuss about a letter which must catch the afternoon post, so Mrs. Romney refused to own that she had a headache, though she is only fit to lie down and have a nap."

"I thought your brother was at Karslake?"

"Oh, he went over there, but Colonel Faucit and the mare had gone to Bolton. After all, he was not expected until next week, so he came in late for luncheon, and Mrs. Romney had a pretty severe lecture for sending him off on such a wild-goose chase."

"Was he angry with her?"

"Angry? Not a bit. Romney is the best tempered fellow in the world, but he dearly loves a grumble. You may be sure that Mrs. Romney was far more vexed than he. She is writing letters for him as a sort of penance: she furnishes all the ideas, and Romney smokes and fancies that he is hard at work. When they have finished they will go up and have a romp with Harry."

"Oh, Oliver, I want to tell you something. I saw Mrs. Romney

at some window in Church Street, and, though she must have seen the carriage, she did not take the slightest notice of me."

"In Church Street? Are you sure?" asked Oliver, in a matter-of-fact tone.

"Quite sure. I saw her distinctly. She had her gray cloak on, and her big Spanish-looking hat. No one wears that sort of hat now: so of course I noticed it."

"Did my mother see her too?"

"No; and she only laughed at me when I mentioned the fact. She says Mrs. Romney knows no one in Church Street."

"Oh, I would not be too sure of that," returned Oliver, indifferently, as though the subject did not interest him. "Mrs. Romney has a large circle of acquaintance, but they do not all belong to the upper classes. They include all sorts and conditions of men. She is very philanthropic in her views."

"Do you know, Lady Carfax told me something about Mrs. Romney that surprised me very much? I had no idea that she had been a governess."

"I wonder why my mother chose to impart that unnecessary piece of information," returned Oliver, rather dryly. "She is perfectly devoted to Mrs. Romney, and so is my father, but they never can forget this fact. I have always respected Romney because he is so free from prejudice. I remember when he told me about his engagement that his words to me were, 'Whatever the home people say, remember I am marrying a thorough gentlewoman. Catherine's poverty has nothing to do with herself. Her father is a gentleman who has known better days. She has had a hard life, poor girl, and yet she has such a happy nature.'"

"Your brother met her at a friend's house?"

"Yes. I will tell you all about it," returned Oliver, who was secretly amused at Elsie's interest in his brother's love-affairs: all women were romantic, he thought. "There was a family dinner-party at the Traffords', and he sat by her. He knew, of course, that she was the governess. A deaf spinster aunt sat at his right hand: so he was glad to talk to Catherine. Her conversation interested him, he thought her so frank and unconscious in manner, but he lost his heart to her a few hours later when he heard her singing little Phoebe to sleep in the dark school-room. Phoebe—poor little soul, she is dead now—was a sad invalid, and at times suffered a good deal.

"Romney told me that he was just running up-stairs to fetch something he had left in his room, and as he walked down the passage he heard a clear sweet voice singing Keble's Evening Hymn; the pure liquid notes arrested him, and after a moment he advanced towards the half-opened door of the school-room. Catherine was standing by the window with the child in her arms. He could see her face distinctly in the moonlight; she was singing with her whole soul, and in his eyes she looked like some radiant young St. Cecilia. As Romney crept from the door he said to himself, in an awed voice, 'That girl shall be my wife,' and before two months were over they were engaged."

"I am so glad you have told me this, Oliver. It is almost as interesting as a novel."

"What a romantic child! I wish Romney could hear you. But Catherine's happiness was rather chequered at first. The Traffords were not pleased with the engagement, and they have been very cold to Romney ever since. They wanted him to fall in love with Felicia, the eldest daughter, a very handsome girl; and Mrs. Trafford accused Catherine of designing underhand ways. The poor girl had rather a life of it; it was all pique and jealousy on their part; but Romney settled matters in an off-hand fashion by marrying Catherine as soon as possible. He would not hear of waiting for an outfit: she could get everything she wanted in Paris. And so he had his way. Now, darling, I think we have talked enough about Mrs. Romney. If you like to put on your hat I will take you for a walk,—unless you would prefer a game of tennis." But Elsie voted for the walk.

Elsie professed herself delighted with Fordham; and she and Oliver stopped for a few minutes to admire the view. Below them lay a green park-like meadow, with trees and browsing cattle, and in the centre Fordham Church, with its fine tower and the sunset clouds behind it. Oliver took her in presently to see the church, and Elsie expressed her admiration of the carved oaken screen and beautiful painted windows; and as they sauntered through the carefully-kept churchyard she observed that in her opinion Fordham was an ideal village.

"It is so bright and cleanly," she continued, "and then the church is so beautiful. I think Mrs. Romney is very fortunate to have such pleasant surroundings. She tells me the vicar and his wife are charming people, and that there is no lack of delightful neighbors."

"Don't you think we shall be just as fortunate at Dene?" observed Oliver, gravely. "Banksland has one advantage over the Frythe—there is the river." And then, with pardonable egotism, he began enlarging on his own prospects. There was some fear that his regiment might be ordered to India. He had been talking to Romney about that last night, and he was very keen about their marrying as soon as possible. "I could not leave you behind, Elsie," he continued, wistfully. But Elsie refused to be drawn into any sort of discussion. "Uncle George would not hear of her marrying yet," she answered, "and if Oliver were ordered to India he must exchange into another regiment: that was all." But Oliver shook his head at this.

"Never mind. I will get Mrs. Romney to talk to you," he returned. "If I go to India,—and go I must before another year is out,—I do not intend to leave my wife behind." But Elsie turned a deaf ear to this. She wanted Oliver to tell her the name of the little speckled bird on the hawthorn bough; and did he see that rabbit sitting up on end and stroking its dear little whiskers with its paws? In fact, there was no end to Elsie's inquisitiveness. Oliver smiled at the girl's wilfulness. He could bide his time. Elsie would not let him go alone, he knew that. She might tease him and argue with him, but her heart was safely in his keeping. When the right time came, the young heiress of Banksland would follow her husband as faithfully as

the wife of any non-commissioned officer. "She has plenty of backbone, in spite of her skittishness, and she is as sweet as she is sound," had been the Squire's criticism the previous night. "Don't leave her behind you, Oliver. India will do her no harm for a year or two. When you have earned your laurels and done your duty to your queen and country, you can take to farming and a country gentleman's life, if you like." And, as Oliver shared this opinion and was a thorough soldier at heart, no amount of coaxing on Elsie's part would have induced him to remain in England. "You have promised to be a soldier's wife, my sweet, and you must not tempt me to desert my post," he said later on when he renewed the subject; and Elsie dropped her pretty little head in silence, for she knew that Oliver was right. The secret of his influence with her was his unswerving truth, and also his deeply-ingrained sense of duty: other men prevaricated; they had principles, but they sought to evade them: their words were uncertain, and their standard was the world's standard. Oliver was absolutely true,—Mrs. Romney had told her that; and she was beginning to find it out for herself: yes, he was true himself, and he demanded truth in others. She must take care not to disappoint him.

"We will have our ride to-morrow," he observed as they turned in at the gate of the Frythe; and Elsie agreed happily to this. Oliver had been charming all the way home: he had dropped the awkward subject of India, and amused Elsie with some of his Aldershot experiences and some humorous stories that his brother officers had told him. Only now and then a word betrayed his confidence about the future:

"You will like our colonel, Elsie. He is a splendid fellow; and Mrs. Fullerton is such a nice motherly woman. She will take you under her wing directly. All the young married ladies go to her for advice. She mothers them all." Or,

"Maxwell is such a useful servant. I find him invaluable: he thinks nothing a trouble; you will find him a handy fellow in packing. Every one envies me such a treasure. And then he loves Indian life."

"You must let me go now, Oliver. There is the dressing-bell. Thank you for taking me for such a delightful walk."

"I will send you up some flowers," was Oliver's answer, as he turned in the direction of the conservatory. "Any color will do, I suppose, as you always wear white in the evening." Nevertheless Oliver made his choice slowly and fastidiously. As he gathered some maidenhair fern, Mrs. Romney came into the conservatory: she was still in her walking-dress, and looked pale and weary; and there was a dark shade under her eyes.

"Well, Oliver?" a little abruptly.

"Oh, yes, she saw you," trying to reach a tempting-looking bud over his head. "Elsie has sharp eyes. It was foolish of you to go to the window. I dare say the servants saw you too."

"Yes, I caught Martin's eye; not that it matters, but Elsie would chatter to Gran about me: did she wonder very much, Oliver, at seeing me in such a poky little house?"

"No, she was only curious for a moment; but of course I took it

as a matter of course. Rab was in the town, too. I came across him once or twice. You will have to be careful, Catherine."

"Yes, I know," sighing, "and by nature I am so incautious. Thank you, Oliver dear, for all you have done for me. I wish I could do something for you in return."

"You can do something, Catherine," in rather a peculiar tone. "Be a brave woman and tell Romney: nothing would please me so well as that."

"Ah, no, not now—not until—oh, you know what I mean. There is no need for me to explain. It is cruel of you to say that, Oliver, when you know how it would pain Romney."

"You are wrong. You are making a grievous mistake." And Oliver's voice was somewhat stern. "You are a good woman, Catherine, but on this point you are lamentably wrong. I told you so last night. You are disappointing me terribly."

"Hush, hush! there is Romney." And the next moment the Squire made his appearance. He was in evening dress, and it was evident that his object was to select his button-hole.

"Why, Catherine," with a surprised glance at her dress, "you will be late for dinner. Why on earth are you wasting your time chattering with Oliver? I never saw such a woman for talking in my life."

"I will be ready in a moment, dear." And she brushed quickly past him. And as Oliver muttered something about being late too, the Squire found himself alone.

"I wonder what has come to Kitty," he mused. "She is not half as bright as usual, and she always seems in a hurry. Her head used not to ache as it does now. I think I will ask Fergusson to have a look at her: only Kitty does so hate fuss and doctoring, and she always says there is nothing the matter with her; but she looked uncommonly queer just now," grumbled the Squire as he adjusted the flower in his coat.

CHAPTER VII.

A HEATED ARGUMENT.

Then he will talk,—great gods, how he will talk!

NATHANIEL LEE.

DURING dinner the shower that had been foretold by the Squire pattered lightly against the window-panes, and Elsie observed, in a tone of regret, that they would have to spend the evening in-doors.

"Catherine will have to sing to us," suggested Lady Carfax. "My daughter-in-law is an accomplished musician," she continued, addressing Elsie; "she has a very sweet, well-trained voice, that gives us all a great deal of pleasure."

"You must not praise me too highly, Gran, or Elsie will be disappointed," returned Mrs. Romney, smiling.—"I know you sing too," turning to the girl. "My husband is very fond of music, and Oliver also, so our efforts to amuse them will not be thrown away." And as soon as they returned to the drawing-room, Elsie was coaxed to the piano. Her voice was sweet, though not powerful, and her perform-

ance was warmly praised, and it was with some reluctance that Mrs. Romney consented to take her place.

"I am in no mood for singing to-night," she observed in a low tone to Oliver, who was lingering by the piano.

"Why don't you make your headache an excuse, then? I can see it is pretty bad," was his sensible reply; but Mrs. Romney hesitated and glanced at her husband.

He had seated himself in a large easy-chair by the window, and his whole attitude expressed intense enjoyment. The Squire was passionately fond of music, and his greatest pleasure was to hear his wife sing. In his opinion, Elsie's fresh young voice was nothing in comparison; when Catherine sang, her whole soul seemed wrapped in her song, and as her clear, penetrating voice reached his ears, the Squire's thoughts would travel back to a certain scene that persistently haunted him,—a girl with the face of a St. Cecilia singing to a sick child in the moonlight: how distinctly he could recall that scene, and the sudden strange beating of his heart, as he looked at the graceful figure, and the coils of dark hair against the white neck, and vowed to himself that she, and she only, should be his wife!

"I must not disappoint him," she whispered; and, as usual, she sang for him, and him alone. What did it matter to Catherine if the room were crowded with admiring auditors? To her there was only one listener, the big fair-haired man at the other end of the room. She knew well how those honest blue-gray eyes would glisten as she sang "Auld Robin Gray" or "Home they brought her warrior dead." Indeed, she knew how to play on every sensitive chord in her husband's heart. Sometimes when she sang some stirring ballad or wild warlike strain, Romney would start up from his chair and pace up and down the room, with his head erect, and his eyes shining with enthusiasm.

"Bravo, Kitty! that was splendid," he would say with a long-drawn sigh of excitement. "That makes me feel as though I want to fight. By Jove, if I had a Zulu or two here!" and the Squire's clinched fist was suggestive; but his pugnacity died a natural death, and he grew restful and quiet, as some solemn strain of Handel's floated across the room. "He shall feed His flock," Catherine sang that grandly, or "Let the bright Seraphim," the radiant St. Cecilia look always came into her face then. At such moments Romney almost worshipped his wife.

Elsie listened delightedly, as Mrs. Romney sang that evening; she told Oliver afterwards that she had never heard a more beautiful voice; but the Squire moved a little restlessly in his chair: something was amiss with Catherine's songs to-night; they sounded tame and spiritless, as though the singer's thoughts were far away; once her voice quavered and broke, and she recovered herself with an effort. By and by she stopped abruptly. "I cannot sing more to-night, dear," she said, apologetically. "I feel stupid and tired." Then the Squire was on the alert in a moment. What had tired her? Any one could see she was not herself. He insisted on knowing what ailed her, in rather an authoritative voice. A little headache? was she sure there was nothing more? certain? positive? why had she taken the trouble to sing to them? she was a silly woman, and he desired that she would sit

perfectly quiet until bedtime; he would put a shade on the lamp if the light were too strong for her eyes.

Mrs. Romney accepted the shade with gratitude and took up her knitting; she was sorry to be so stupid, but headaches were stupid things; she begged every one else to be as lively as possible. What was Gran reading? was it an amusing story? and at this question Lady Carfax laid down her book and pince-nez, with a dissatisfied air. With regard to novels, she was a severe critic; in her opinion, her humble opinion, the novels of the present day were remarkably deficient in originality and power; their incidents were far-fetched and impossible; and as Lady Carfax was an inveterate reader, it must be owned that she had a tolerable acquaintance with most of the leading novels. Nothing pleased her better than to point out the defects and weak passages of the last-read work of fiction; and it was just possible that Mrs. Romney knew this, when she so innocently asked if Gran's story were amusing.

"I suppose most people would call it amusing, my dear," she returned, guardedly; "the descriptions are good as a whole, and it is not badly written,"—this was probably the fact, as the book had been written by one of the first novelists of the day,—“but I should never have thought that it had been written by a man.”

"Why not, mother?" this question being put rather lazily by the Squire; he was sitting on the couch beside his wife in a regular Darby-and-Joan fashion. Lady Carfax's views on literature always amused her sons.

"Because his hero, the young doctor, is so absurdly quixotic: he actually hesitates for a long time before he proposes to the girl, because she happens to be rich. Most men would think money an advantage to a woman."

"Not in my opinion," returned Romney, looking at his wife with a smile, and totally ignoring the fact that his brother was engaged to an heiress; but Oliver was equal to the occasion.

"Hamerton would agree with you, old fellow: don't you recollect that telling passage?—I read it out to you and Mrs. Romney, because I thought it so good,—'Marriage is a lifelong conversation, and I have never found that conversation with any lady was more interesting because she had money in her purse.'"

"Capital!" chuckled the Squire. "Marriage is a lifelong conversation, eh, Kitty?"

"Hamerton said something equally good," went on Oliver, quietly. "'To marry a woman of whom you know nothing, is to intrust your children to a woman of whom you know as little.'"

"Well, that is true too," observed the Squire, but Mrs. Romney interrupted them rather wickedly:

she chanted,

"A man may spare,"

"And still be bare,
If his wife be nowt, if his wife be nowt,
But a man may spend,
And have money to lend,
If his wife be owt, if his wife be owt."

"Hear! hear!" observed the Squire, delighted with the aptness of the quotation; but Lady Carfax, who was deficient in humor, treated this interruption with quiet disdain: her head was still full of her novel.

"A well-told story ought to be true to life," she continued, sententiously. "There is false sentiment, I should say, almost a diseased sentiment, in the doctor's character."

"Bother the doctor!" muttered Oliver, and Elsie laughed at his bored expression, but Romney inquired amiably if the doctor and the heiress had hit it off at last.

"They are married, if you mean that, but the misunderstandings have begun in the second volume; the wife has some secret intrusted to her, which she is unable to tell him, and he has found it out, and in consequence they are on the eve of a separation: the poor girl is not a bit to blame, and it is mere persecution on his part. The fact is, he demands impossibilities. Just listen to this passage, Catherine! 'When I married you, I understood that I was to share your life; that we were to be really and truly united for time and eternity; that is the essence and meaning of marriage. But now you have shut me out from your confidence, there is a part of your life from which I am excluded; as your husband, I have a right to demand thorough confidence: your very thoughts are mine.'"

"The fellow is a prig," murmured Oliver. "Don't be afraid, Elsie; I shall never demand your confidence in that high-flown and despotic manner."

"I don't agree with you," returned his brother. "I take the doctor's part." And the Squire got up from his seat and took possession of the rug, a sure sign that he was disposed for an argument. "It is a foregone conclusion with all sensible people that absolute confidence is imperative between a man and his wife, and I know Catherine holds the same views."

"There are exceptions to every rule," she returned, in rather a low voice. "I have read the book, Romney; it is a painful story, but I took the wife's part throughout; if she deceived her husband, it was for his own good, and she suffered most bitterly."

"Stuff! nonsense!" retorted the Squire, thoroughly annoyed at this. "As though any woman could treat her husband as though he were a child! 'Deceived him for his good'! I wonder at you, Catherine, for going over to the enemy in this fashion; but you are only contradicting me for the sake of argument. In my opinion," still more obstinately, "no circumstances could justify any wife in keeping a secret from her husband; it is absolute disloyalty; she is acting a daily lie, and——"

"Oh, no, Romney," and Catherine dropped her work and spoke in an agitated voice, "please do not say such dreadful things! but of course you do not mean them. A wife may be loyal to her husband in every thought and fibre of her being, and yet she may be so unhappily placed, there may be conflicting duties, troubles that she must keep to herself.—Oh, Oliver," almost passionately, "why do you not take my part? But you are men, and you do not understand."

"Why, Catherine," and the Squire regarded her with surprise,

"how pale you look, and there are actually tears in your eyes! You foolish child, to agitate yourself so over a mere argument!"

"Because I feel it so deeply, and you are all against me, except Gran,—even Oliver."

"Yes, even Oliver." And Captain Carfax looked at her rather meaningly.

"Of course I know that, and it seems so hard, it almost crushes me. Romney, it makes me unhappy even to differ from you in an argument. I want your opinions to be mine; I never willingly disagree with you; but there may be circumstances——"

But it was not easy to silence the Squire; he was singularly tenacious in an argument: Catherine's persistence did not please him.

"Now, look here, Catherine," he said, authoritatively, "if novel-reading is going to infuse those pernicious ideas into your head, the less you read them the better: they would not do me any harm; I should hold my own views all the same, and no amount of brilliant meretricious arguments would influence me. But I will read the book and judge for myself. But I tell you this, you and my mother are both wrong; if I had been that doctor fellow, I should never have had confidence in that woman again. 'You have deceived me once for my good, and perhaps next time you will deceive me for your own,'—I should say that to her; 'and as I value truth before everything, perhaps we had better——' Why, Catherine, my darling, what ails you?" for Mrs. Romney's face was buried in her hands, and she was shivering visibly, but at his touch she started up almost wildly.

"You are cruel, all of you! you have no right to talk so! Let me go, Romney: all this stupid talk has made my head worse." But, though she laughed in a forced manner, her face was very pale. "No, don't come with me," as her husband followed her. "Go back, Romney dear; I would rather be alone."

The Squire returned to the hearth-rug in a crestfallen manner.

"What has come over Catherine? I never saw her like this before. I am sure she must be ill. Mother, don't you think I had better send for Fergusson?" but Lady Carfax shook her head.

"She has a bad headache, and our discussion has excited her. Catherine has very deep feelings; once before she was a little hysterical,—don't you remember, Romney, when that Ferard affair happened? The poor woman was wholly to blame, and no one in their senses would have dreamt of taking her part; but Catherine made herself perfectly miserable about her. You were quite angry with her then."

"Yes, I remember; but that was a very different matter, mother. I could understand Catherine being upset then, but to be hysterical over a novel! Well, I shall go and have a smoke." And there was a cloud on the Squire's brow as he bade the ladies good-night and went off to his den.

"Shall I go up to Catherine, Oliver?" asked Lady Carfax, a little anxiously.

"I think you had better leave her alone," was his cautious reply. "This is a stupid ending to the evening, Elsie," he continued, as he lighted her candle. "Mrs. Romney seldom gives way like this; she

is over-tired, and has had a worrying day. I tell her sometimes that she cultivates the emotional side of her nature too much: she wants more ballast."

Oliver's speech was a little too bracing for Elsie: she felt vaguely sorry for Mrs. Romney: it was unkind to go off to her own room and not bid her good-night. She hesitated for a moment as she passed the door, and then she took courage and knocked.

A faint "Come in" gave her permission to enter. The room was large and full of shadows, but she could dimly discern a dark figure standing by the window. "I could not go to bed without wishing you good-night," observed the girl, apologetically. "Is your head very bad, Mrs. Romney? Can I do anything for you? Oh, dear!" as a low sob reached her ear, "you are fretting about something. That is so wrong: it will make your head worse."

"No, it will relieve me. I do not often cry; my husband hates me to shed a tear. Where is Romney? Was he vexed with me? I have never been so silly before, but—but—I felt as though my heart would break when he said that," leaning her head against Elsie as she stood beside her in the darkness. Mrs. Romney had sunk into a chair as she spoke, as though her strength had failed her.

"Dear Mrs. Romney, you will make yourself quite ill," observed the girl, anxiously. "Why, your hands are like ice! Would you like me to go to Mr. Carfax? He is in the smoking-room with Oliver. Perhaps if you talked to him it would do you good."

"Nothing would do me good to-night, and I would not have my husband see me like this for the world; it would trouble him so, and he would give me no peace; a night's sleep, that is what I want. Oh, Elsie, when you marry Oliver, never keep anything from him, however small and foolish it may be; men are not like us, they have such hard fixed rules; they do not make allowances; truth, they will have that at any cost."

"I shall like to tell Oliver everything," returned Elsie, simply. "I could not hide anything if I tried."

"We are alike in that, Elsie dear. I love truth as dearly as you do. I am a bad actress, whatever Oliver may say. I have always been so frank and outspoken, and I loathe any form of deceit; one's husband is one's self. Oh, you will understand it some day; one does not easily lie to one's self."

"No, of course not." But Elsie was a little bewildered. If Mrs. Romney had anything on her mind, why did she not tell her husband? But had she anything on her mind? Last night she had seemed so bright and radiant, so full of overflowing spirits.

"Do not talk any more to me to-night, Elsie," was Mrs. Romney's next speech. "In some moods I am better alone. My husband will be coming up directly, and I want him to think I am asleep. I must just go and kiss Harry, and then I will go to bed. Don't trouble about me any more, dear child: I shall be all right to-morrow." And Elsie felt herself dismissed.

CHAPTER VIII.

A MATCH-MAKER.

Jog on, jog on the foot-path way,
And merrily bent the stile-a;
A merry heart goes all the way,
Your sad tires in a mile-a.

Winter's Tale.

WHEN Elsie went down-stairs the next morning she found the family gathered round the breakfast-table. Mrs. Romney greeted her with an affectionate smile: she looked pale and jaded, as though she had passed an unrefreshing night, but she spoke with her usual animation. The Squire had evidently slept off his dissatisfaction, and was in capital spirits: to Elsie's intense surprise, he alluded jestingly to the last night's argument:

"Catherine has recovered her temper, you see. We need not be afraid of saying anything to her this morning. We have had it out, and she has promised to be a better woman for the future, and to allow her husband to have the last word. No more contradiction, eh, Mrs. Kitty?"

"Were you speaking to me, love?" and Mrs. Romney's tone was very gentle. "I was wondering just then what was the matter with the urn: will you help me with it, Romney?" and the Squire rose with the utmost alertness. A domestic emergency always pleased him: he liked to lecture, and find fault, and dominate over his womenkind in a peremptory good-natured way. Kitty was reproved and set on one side and admonished as though she were an infant. Another time she would have laughed in his face and told him that he was a goose and knew nothing about urns; but this morning she listened to him meekly, and as he stooped over her Elsie saw her rest her cheek against his coat-sleeve for a moment, and a great sadness came into her beautiful eyes.

"Elsie and I are going to ride over to Crome this morning," observed Oliver, when the Squire had returned to his seat. "What are you good people going to do with yourselves?"

"Catherine and I are going to drive to Repton," returned his brother. "A drive will do her good; for she looks uncommonly seedy. We shall come back by Draycott, and I shall look in at the club and read the papers while Catherine does her chores: she seems uncommonly fond of shopping just now," finished the Squire, mischievously, and a deep flush rose to his wife's face.

"You proposed the club yourself, dear. My business can very well wait." But the Squire received this remark with good-natured derision; and for the remainder of the meal he seemed bent on teasing his wife and putting her out of countenance.

Elsie enjoyed her ride through the long deep lanes fragrant with honeysuckle and sweet-brier roses. The steep shady banks were lined with hart's-tongue fern; and beyond the wide stretch of meadowlands rose the dark purple range of hills, casting their shadows over the whole country. They rode slowly with slackened reins under the dark arching trees: the still beauty of the summer morning, with its

freshness and perfume and exuberance of young quivering life, seemed to fill Elsie's nerves with quicksilver; and Oliver's mood was almost as joyous as hers.

"If we could always be young," sighed Elsie, "and it were always summer. I do so hate getting old, Oliver! Can you fancy me with wrinkles and gray hairs like old Mrs. Spiller at the Lodge?"

"We shall grow old together, darling,—that is one blessing," returned her companion, with an admiring glance at the slight trim figure beside him. Elsie's fair hair was dishevelled, her eyes were bright with youth and happiness. Would those pink cheeks ever grow pallid and lined? would there be crow's-feet under the smiling eyes? Perpetual youth and summer, that was what Elsie wished; she would have had flowers grow all the year round in that improbable country of her dreams.

Oliver smiled a little gravely over the girl's quaint conceit. He had a notion that life meant something better than unclouded sunshine. Youth at its best was immaturity: the growing instinct that is in all healthy human nature could not be restrained in this fashion: the many-sided aspects of life, its working days and stormy nights, its autumns and winters and brief changeable springs, were more alluring to Oliver than Elsie's perpetual summer.

"I am not afraid of growing old," continued Oliver, thoughtfully, "but I must have my life first; when I have fought a few battles and done something for my country I will not refuse to lie still on my oars. Nothing lasts in this world; even our ride, perfect as it has been, must come to an end," as they turned in at the gates.

Mrs. Romney was watching for them at the hall door. She ran down the steps to pet the horses.

"Romney is on the tennis-ground marking out the courts," she said, as she produced some lumps of sugar from her pocket. Jess was already rubbing her arm with soft dainty lips, as though asking for the delicacy. Oliver, who was detaching Elsie's small foot from the stirrup, lifted her down, and then turned to his sister-in-law:

"Surely you have not been to Repton and back in this time?"

"Oh, no; Romney changed his mind, and after all we only drove in to Draycott. He had to go to the bank and to one or two places; and neither of us cared for a longer drive.—Elsie dear, do not trouble to change your habit before luncheon. It is just ready. We have some people coming this afternoon to tennis, and you can make yourself smart by three o'clock."

"Catherine did not want to go to Repton," observed Mr. Carfax as he took his seat, "so I just overhauled the papers at the club while she did her errands.—I saw you ordering groceries, Kitty, as Rab and I passed Williams. Who was that young lady to whom you were talking so earnestly?"

"Young lady?" returned his wife, rather hurriedly. "Whom could you mean, Romney?"

"Oh, Rab saw you first: he is a regular ferret, and puts his nose into everything. 'There's your wife, Squire,' he said, 'and she is talking to an overgrown child in pink cotton. Let us go in and speak

to her.' But I was in a hurry, so I could not wait. Who was your friend, Kitty?"

"Romney, do you mind telling me what figure you gave for Jess?" asked Oliver, abruptly. "She carried Elsie splendidly this morning. Excuse me for interrupting you, Mrs. Romney, but I am writing to Malings by this afternoon's post; and he is going to look out for a likely mare. Romney is a good judge of horseflesh, and I want to put Malings up to a trick or two."

"Jess was a regular bargain," returned the Squire, somewhat flattered by this praise, and the next minute they were in eager discussion. Mrs. Romney drew a quick breath, and then turned to Elsie. She wanted to know what she intended to wear that afternoon. "You must make yourself pretty, because the Pollocks are coming, and they are very big people;" but it may be doubted whether she heard the girl's answer. She rose from the table before the gentlemen had finished. "Come, Gran," she said, imperiously, "there is no need to wait for them. When Romney talks about horses, he sits half the afternoon." But the Squire's voice called her back before they had reached the door.

"What a hurry you are in, Kitty! and I forgot to tell you something: Rab has asked us all to dinner to-morrow, and will take no refusal. I made an excuse for you, mother, that you never leave the Pater in the evening, but the rest of us will have to go. How he will seat us all in that room is a problem that Rab must solve; but I am almost suffocated by the prospect beforehand."

"How absurd Mr. Lockhart is with his invitations!" returned Mrs. Romney, with unusual irritation. "You might have refused, Romney: you know we would all much rather stay at home."

"Speak for yourself, Kitty. An evening at The Hut is very good fun, and when you once get into your chair it is not so bad, and, by Jove, he has a capital cook. I respect that woman. Mrs. Brattle has a vocation. The Brattle sauces are not to be despised."

"Don't talk in that ridiculous way, Romney, or Elsie will think you are a gourmand. He does not really mind what he eats, Elsie; bread and cheese would content him: he puts on these epicurean airs to make you believe he is dainty."

"I knew that would fetch Kitty," laughed the Squire. "She thinks Rab a sensualist because he likes a good dinner and is rather fastidious about his wines: she is a bit of a Puritan in her way, and thinks it shocking waste of money to drink good wine. Well, my dear, I am sorry Rab's impromptu feast does not please you, because I told him that we should be delighted to come.—Don't you think it will be great fun?" turning to Elsie; and Elsie could not deny that she thought it would be amusing; she was sure Mr. Lockhart would be a droll host.

"Very well, we will go, then," returned Mrs. Romney, resignedly. "You must put on your oldest gown, for there is hardly space to turn in Rab's rooms, they are so crowded with curiosities. It is a pretty little house," she continued, as they went up-stairs, "but Rab has no idea of arrangement; he buys everything that takes his fancy, and Mrs. Brattle has to find room for it. Oh, you recollect that I told

you I had a little scheme in my head : there is a poor little governess I know, such a harmless gentle little creature, who would make an excellent wife for Rab. Wait a moment : I shall have to take Romney into confidence, after all.—Romney," as he came up out of the dining-room at that instant with his cigarette-case in his hand, "do you mind if I ask Gussie Poole to-morrow to stay for a day or two? She has not been here for months?"

"Gussie Poole!" in a disgusted tone. "My dear child, what an idea! Oliver always finds her such an infliction; and he hates people being here during his visits."

"Gussie will not be in his way: she is always with me or Harry," returned his wife, in a pleading tone. "I had such a forlorn little note from her this morning: she has lost her situation, the people are going abroad, and she is so miserable with that step-mother of hers. She lives in Draycott, Elsie, and we could drive over in the wagonette to-morrow and fetch her."

"But why to-morrow? You know we are going to dine at The Hut. If you must have her, she could come the next day."

"Oh, I shall take her to The Hut; you know Rab always expects us to bring our guests," and now Mrs. Romney's eyes began to glisten with mischief. "Don't be tiresome, dear, and thwart my little scheme: I have set my heart on taking Gussie." Then the Squire burst into a great laugh.

"So that is your little game, Kitty? You silly woman, do you suppose Rab, with all his oddities, will fall in love with that washed-out little creature? Besides, he has seen her."

"Indeed he has not," replied Mrs. Romney. "Gussie has only stayed with us once, and Rab was away; and she is a good little thing, and not really plain, if she had enough to eat and her clothes were not so shabby."

"Pshaw! Well, do as you like." And the Squire turned on his heel. Catherine's *protégées* were legion, and they were none of them too well dressed, but he secretly chuckled over the idea that Rab, who was a gentleman in spite of his eccentricities, and came of an old family, should cast admiring eyes on a little pale-faced girl like Gussie.

"I am half in joke and half in earnest," went on Mrs. Romney, as she followed Elsie into her room. "I have such a fellow-feeling for poor Gussie, she is such a good little soul, such a hard-working, noble little creature, quite a heroine in her small way, and she has one of the typical fairy-tale sort of step-mother; but," checking herself, "I will not trust myself to speak of that woman."

"And she is a governess?"

"Yes, a daily governess, a poor little half-educated drudge, for she has been earning her own livelihood ever since she was fifteen. The father was a curate at St. Paul's; before he married again they were fairly comfortable; but a large young family drained his resources; he only died three years ago, and since then they have been terribly pinched. It really goes to my heart to see Gussie's shabby frocks. I used to give her a new gown now and then, and you should have seen

the poor girl's gratitude; but this year I have had nothing to spare for Gussie."

"I have a good idea," returned Elsie, who was very generous by nature. "Could I not give her one of my dresses? Holbrook has put in far too many; I shall never want them all, and I should not like Oliver to think me too extravagant, as he notices everything I wear. Shall I show you my dresses, Mrs. Romney? and then you can choose the one you think most suitable, and perhaps your maid could make it fit Miss Poole."

"You are a darling," returned Mrs. Romney, overjoyed at this proposition. "Now I come to think about it, Gussie is just your height, only she is much thinner. You will be a real fairy godmother, Elsie, and my poor Cinderella will be transformed. I should not be surprised if Gussie should look quite pretty, for she has an interesting little face."

"She must be made to believe that the dress is your present," returned Elsie, earnestly: "she could not accept a gift from a perfect stranger." And Mrs. Romney agreed to this.

It was not very easy to make the selection, but at last Mrs. Romney fixed on a dainty white frock trimmed with beautiful embroidery; it was far too good, she observed, but all Elsie's gowns were perfect; but it had one advantage over the others, that it would wash.

"I can spare that blue cotton as well," returned Elsie, magnanimously; "it is very pretty, and I bought it in Paris, but I can easily do without it. There is a hat that matches it. Do take it, Mrs. Romney. I can buy a dozen new gowns if I like, and Uncle George will only call me an extravagant puss. I should love Miss Poole to have them." And, after a great deal of persuasion, Mrs. Romney consented to avail herself of Elsie's generosity.

She mystified Oliver by calling Elsie the fairy godmother all the remainder of the day, though she refused to enlighten him about the origin of the title and teased him unmercifully about Gussie.

A letter was sent by hand to Draycott, and the servant brought back Gussie's reply. Mrs. Romney showed it to Elsie that evening:

"Dear, dear Mrs. Romney," wrote Gussie, "how good you are! I was quite miserable and hopeless when I woke this morning. I could not see the least little bit of comfort anywhere: things have been getting worse lately, and I have cried myself to sleep every night. When I showed your note to mamma, she made no objection to my coming; I dare say that in her heart she is glad to get rid of me for a day or two: so I will be quite ready for you to-morrow morning.

"Yours most gratefully and lovingly,

"GUSSIE."

CHAPTER IX.

A MODERN CINDERELLA.

Where's the cook? is supper ready, the house trimmed, rushes strewed, cobwebs swept?
Taming of the Shrew.

THE Squire asked Oliver to ride with him the next morning to see a new barn that had just been erected on the farm: so Mrs. Romney and Elsie went alone to Draycott.

Gussie was to be ready for them by twelve o'clock: so, as there was half an hour to spare, Mrs. Romney proposed that they should utilize the time by laying in a stock of stationery that was needed for household use.

Mrs. Romney had almost completed her purchases at the stationer's, and Elsie was amusing herself at the opposite counter by turning over some pictorial papers, when a young girl entered the shop and took up her position beside her.

Elsie was too much engrossed with the *Graphic* to notice her at first, until a remarkably sweet voice reached her ear, when she turned round and regarded her rather curiously; at the same moment Mrs. Romney rose hastily, and, after a few words spoken in a low tone to the man who was serving her, left the shop without taking any notice of Elsie.

The girl was shabbily dressed in a pink cotton that was evidently outgrown and had been frequently washed. She looked about fourteen, though she was rather tall for that age, and her face was thin and singularly careworn. She had soft, pathetic-looking blue eyes, and a long plait of fair hair fell to her waist. She looked at Elsie in a shy admiring way; probably she had never seen such a dainty little person before; then she gave her attention to a book she was selecting.

"We have had that already. Will you please show me something else?—one of Trollope's or Kingsley's will do——" but at this moment Elsie missed Mrs. Romney.

"Mrs. Carfax is outside," observed the shopman, noticing her surprise, and Elsie found her inspecting some childish garments in the window of the baby-linen shop.

"Do you think those pinafores pretty?" she asked, as Elsie joined her. "Would they do for Harry? Do you mind going in and asking the price while I go back for a moment? I have forgotten something. Get Mrs. Julius to show you her stock, and I will be with you in a moment."

Elsie did as she was bid; the pinafores were very pretty, and she put aside three for Mrs. Romney's inspection; but more than ten minutes elapsed before Mrs. Romney made her appearance. Elsie went to the door once to see if she were coming; to her surprise, she was standing on the pavement talking to the girl in the pink cotton. When she saw Elsie she left off talking, and joined her at once.

"Have I been long?" she said, hurriedly. "I am so sorry to keep you, Elsie, and we shall be late for Gussie. Let me see those pinafores. Yes, they will do very nicely. Please put them up, Mrs. Julius, and we will take them with us."

"Who was that girl?" asked Elsie, rather inquisitively.

"Oh, she is a young *protégée* of mine," returned Mrs. Romney, carelessly. "I have plenty of friends in Draycott," and her tone somehow made Elsie feel that she had been too curious. The next moment she recollected the Squire's speech "about the overgrown child in pink cotton." It must be the same girl that Mr. Lockhart had seen yesterday.

Mrs. Romney was rather quiet until they reached their destination, a small uninviting house, with an untidy garden. As the wagonette stopped, the door opened, and a rough-looking maid-of-all-work brought out a shabby brown portmanteau; a young lady followed her, whom Mrs. Romney welcomed very kindly.

"Jump in, Gussie, or we shall be late for luncheon. This is my little sister-in-law to be,—Elsie Vaughan; she and I are great friends already.—Elsie, I have told you all about Gussie, so you need not treat her as a stranger; we must all be as merry as possible."

"I am very glad to see you, Miss Vaughan," returned Gussie, shyly. What a radiant young princess she looked to Gussie, sitting opposite to her in her shabby brown gown! but Elsie regarded her very kindly.

Miss Poole was certainly a plain little person, she thought, and that old brown frock was hideous; but she had nice eyes, and gentle unassuming manners, and there was something very natural and artless about her; it would not be difficult to get fond of her, she was sure of that.

"I nearly cried with joy when I read your letter," Gussie was saying. "Three whole days at the Frythe with you and dear Lady Carfax and Harry—ah! how happy I shall be!" And a soft color came into the thin girlish cheeks that had lost their roundness.

"And my husband,—you have not forgotten my husband, Gussie?"

"No, indeed," in Gussie's most impressive voice. "Mr. Carfax is always so kind to me; but I am rather afraid of him; he is so grand-looking and splendid altogether that I never know what to say to him." And Mrs. Romney laughed at this.

"Oh, we all know how you admire the Squire; but really, Gussie, you must try and get over your awe of menkind.—She is afraid of Oliver too, Elsie; she is as quiet as a mouse when either of them is in the room, and yet she will chatter to me and Gran for the hour together.—We are all going out to dinner to-night, Gussie," she continued, "and I shall take you under my wing. I have told you about Mr. Lockhart, what a good little man he is. I don't believe Rab was ever out of temper in his life, and he does the kindest and most generous actions; he is not handsome, certainly, but he is as good as gold."

As Mrs. Romney made this laudatory speech, a shade passed over Gussie's face, and a distressed look came into her eyes.

"You are very kind, dear Mrs. Romney," she stammered, "and I should dearly love to go with you, it is so long since I have been to a real party, but—but—" and now there were actual tears in the poor girl's eyes, "you had better leave me behind. I should only disgrace you. I have nothing proper to wear."

"Tut! nonsense!" returned Mrs. Romney, vigorously. "Did you ever hear of Cinderella and the fairy godmother? Just wait a little. I am going to bring out a fresh edition of the dear old tale. I am going to play the part of fairy godmother myself, and you shall be turned into a real princess." And as Gussie looked at her with puzzled eyes, she patted her on the shoulder, and told her to be patient, like a good girl.

Two hours afterwards, as Elsie was swinging lazily in a hammock under the elm-trees, Gussie came in search of her, to tell her a most wonderful piece of news.

"Oh, Miss Vaughan," she burst out, and her cheeks were burning with excitement, "did you ever hear of such kindness!" And thereupon Gussie related to her amused auditor how Mrs. Romney had taken her into her room, and shown her the loveliest and daintiest of gowns that she was to wear to-night, and not only that,—and Gussie's eyes looked twice their ordinary size,—but there were such a beautiful blue dress and hat, prettier than any that she had ever seen in her life, which Mrs. Romney had told her that she was to wear at the tennis-party the following afternoon, "and she was quite angry with me when I could not help crying over such kindness," finished Gussie, little dreaming that the real benefactor was rocking herself to and fro in the hammock before her.

"Little Miss Poole looks dowdier than ever," observed the Squire, when he joined his wife in the drawing-room. "Upon my word, Kitty, you are not showing your usual tact and sense. Fancy putting that pale washed-out little creature in her shabby frock beside Elsie Vaughan! I saw Elsie just now, and she looked perfectly charming. Rab, with all his good nature, will never look twice at Miss Poole."

"Rab is far too much of a gentleman to neglect any of his guests," returned Mrs. Romney, tranquilly.—"So you are ready, Gussie, my dear?" as the door opened, and a slim white figure hesitated on the threshold. Gussie in her humility hardly knew how to comport herself in her new finery.

The Squire checked an exclamation with difficulty; then he coughed slightly and rearranged his button-hole bouquet. This smooth-haired little girl with smiling eyes, who was dressed so prettily, could not be Miss Poole! Cinderella transformed into the princess was hardly a more startling transformation than the poor little governess in her shabby brown frock, changed into this well-dressed young lady.

Gussie's blushes were wonderfully becoming: her little white throat swelled with innocent pride; if only her step-mother could have seen her, and Laura and Connie and the boys, they would not have called her Muff then, the *sobriquet* by which Gussie was known at home.

"Miss Vaughan quite started when she saw me," whispered Gussie to her friend. "Dear, dear Mrs. Romney, how happy you have made me! I know I shall enjoy myself this evening."

"I have taken the liberty of bringing a friend who is staying with me," observed Mrs. Romney, when Rab met them at the door. "You have never seen Miss Poole before." And the little man rubbed his hands and looked excessively pleased.

"The more the merrier, eh, Squire? I am delighted to see you at The Hut, Miss Poole." And Mr. Lockhart beamed all over, while Gussie blushed very prettily. No one had ever blushed before when Rab made his little speeches, and Rab positively thrilled with satisfaction as Gussie looked at him with gentle plaintive eyes.

"You are very kind," she faltered, and as Rab ushered them into the drawing-room and went off in search of Mrs. Brattle he felt two inches taller.

"What a beautiful room!" whispered Gussie as she followed Mrs. Romney into a recess, while the Squire, who had grown wary by experience, piloted Elsie round corners and between cabinets until he reached a massive oak settle, when he seated himself with a sigh of relief. Elsie glanced round her curiously, but she did not echo Gussie's speech: to her the low, quaintly-shaped room was overcrowded with furniture,—Chippendale chairs and tables, carved cabinets loaded perilously with old china, lamps, clocks, pictures on easels, blocking up all available space.

"When I once take my seat," observed the Squire, solemnly, "I never move, on principle. I broke a valuable china dish last time I was here; and the time before I knocked over an easel. How any man can live in such a heap of furniture passes my comprehension. Ah, there goes the gong, and here is our host. I have got to take you in to dinner, Elsie. You must not take my arm: it would be dangerous: follow me closely, and I will get you safely out of the room."

The Squire always took the foot of the table on these occasions, and Elsie sat by him. Gussie, as the stranger, found herself placed on the left hand of her host. She was very shy at first, and talked in monosyllables. Rab in his evening attire with diamond studs, and a flashing ring on his little finger, seemed very grand and formidable in Gussie's eyes, but before dinner was over she was chatting to him in her usual artless way.

Rab was rather curious about his new guest: he plied her with questions,—if she lived in Draycott why had they not met before? he was positive that he had never seen her; where had she hidden herself all this time? and then Gussie with many blushes avowed that she had seen Mr. Lockhart more than once; did he not drive into Draycott in a dog-cart with a beautiful bay mare? Oh, yes, he had passed her more than once as she went to her teaching; did not Mr. Lockhart know that she was a governess,—the daily governess? had not Mrs. Romney told him? And Gussie grew crimson, as though she had been detected in a fault.

Before the evening was out, Rab knew all about Gussie's troubles,—the hard, bitter-tempered step-mother and the mischievous unruly brothers and sisters. "They call her Muff, and tease her most unmercifully, and she is so good to them. Gussie has the sweetest nature; she is the most heroic little creature," continued Mrs. Romney, weaving her harmless little web round clumsy slow-witted Rab. "You must ask her to sing. No, I have not brought any songs to-night; I have left them to the girls." But, as Elsie could not be found, Oliver having decoyed her out into the garden, Gussie sang one song after

another, in a fresh, sweet little voice, that went straight to Rab's heart.

Naughty Arachne got him into her corner again while Elsie and Gussie were putting on their hats.

"We have had a delightful evening. You have been very kind and attentive to poor little Miss Poole, Rab, and I assure you your kindness will not be thrown away. Gussie thinks everything beautiful: she told me just now that Mr. Lockhart had such taste, and that she was sure he was very clever to have so many books. You may be sure that I did not undeceive her. I dare say she thinks that you have read them all. Gussie is such a dear, simple child, and believes everything. Do you think her pretty, Rab? Of course she is not as pretty as Elsie, but she has a nice little face. If Gussie were only happy, and had the chances of other girls, a good, kind husband to take care of her—Oh, are you ready, girls? Please don't wait for me. Rab will walk across with me. You may stay with me, if you like, Gussie, unless you prefer to go with my husband." And, as Gussie chose to remain with her friend, the three walked home very happily in the moonlight.

"Well, Gussie, have you enjoyed yourself? Have you had a happy evening? Poor Mr. Lockhart makes a capital host, does he not? But it is very sad to see that pretty little house without a mistress."

"Why does not Mr. Lockhart marry?" asked Gussie, bashfully, and Mrs. Romney returned an evasive answer: not for worlds would she tell the girl that to her knowledge Rab had made fruitless offers to more than five ladies. She questioned Gussie skilfully, and elicited the fact that Rab was not plain in Gussie's eyes. "He is not handsome," continued Gussie, innocently, "but I think he is very pleasant-looking, and he has so much expression." And Mrs. Romney retailed this speech to the much-flattered Rab: evidently prominent light-blue eyes were quite to Gussie's taste, and hence it was a foregone conclusion in Mrs. Romney's opinion.

CHAPTER X.

ELSIE'S POSY.

When the sea is calm, all boats alike
Show mastership in floating.

Coriolanus.

THERE was a large garden-party at the Frythe the next afternoon. It was given in Elsie's honor, and people came from a distance to inspect the young heiress: in his friends' opinion Captain Carfax had done remarkably well for himself, and he was making a far better match than his brother had done. Mrs. Romney was a charming woman, but no one knew anything about her people: gossip reported that she had been a governess, and that her poverty had been so great that even her wedding outfit had been paid for by the Squire.

Happily unconscious of these remarks, Mrs. Romney received her guests with her usual large-hearted hospitality. The Squire, who was

very sociable by nature, dearly loved to gather his friends and neighbors round him on every possible occasion, and it was his wife's delight to carry out his wishes. She was an excellent manager, and the dinners and other entertainments at the Frythe were always admirably arranged. Mrs. Romney was an ideal hostess; she was so full of life and spirits, so anxious that her guests should enjoy themselves and feel at home, that no one could feel neglected or out in the cold.

The Squire was a genial host, but he was not equal to his wife; he preferred to talk to his special cronies or to get into snug corners with a favorite guest and admire his wife's graceful figure as she flitted from one group to another. "Look at her," he said once to his mother: "she finds something to say to every one. She is not even bored by that deaf old Lady Martin. Catherine is so human; she declares she likes everybody, and upon my word I believe she does: Jews, Turks, Infidels, she would have a kind speech for them all. I call her my Lady Bountiful sometimes, and the name just fits her." "Well, Kitty," catching hold of her as she was about to pass him with a smile, "what are you after now? You will wear yourself out trying to be in a dozen places at once."

"Please do not keep me, dear," with an anxious glance at a knot of people in the centre of the lawn: "we are going to get up a game of croquet for the elderly people,—married *versus* single,—and I am looking all over the place for old Miss Davison. Have you seen her, Romney?" enforcing her question with an impatient little shake of his arm. "What are you looking at?" petulantly, as he regarded her with tender amusement. "Something is wrong with my dress: I have torn some lace, I suppose?"

"There is nothing the matter with your dress, my Lady Bountiful," returned the Squire. "Don't ask me to go after old Miss Davison: I detest her. She was in the tea-tent five minutes ago." "There, she is off; did you ever see such a piece of quicksilver, mother? Now she has gone to say pretty things to that spiteful old woman, and I have reason to know," dropping his voice and looking cautiously round him, "that she is the little bird who makes all those nasty remarks about Catherine."

"It is a fine gathering. Most of our friends are here," he remarked, complacently, as he and Elsie walked down the lawn later on, after a most exciting set of tennis: Oliver and a certain Miss Waldegrave had been their opponents, and the Squire and Elsie had won. "Catherine said we had better have a large affair while we were about it; and she was right, as usual. We got the band over from Draycott,—a good band always fetches people,—and I should not be surprised if the young people begin dancing presently. Is it not an animated scene,—all those gay dresses, and the tents, and the beds of flowers?"

"It is very pretty," returned Elsie, dreamily. "Look at that boatful of children on the lake, and the swans gliding in their wake, and those dear little things dancing under the trees. Every one looks so happy. Ah! there is little Miss Poole sitting under the acacia with Mr. Lockhart."

"By Jove, yes, and they have been playing three sets: upon my word, Rab is going it."

"Miss Poole is not a good player," returned Elsie, demurely, "but Mr. Lockhart does not seem to mind. I heard him comforting her just now: he was telling her that she only wanted practice and assurance. It was so amusing to hear him; and Miss Poole was so humble and grateful."

"Elsie, we want you to make up another set," observed Oliver, who now joined them. But Elsie demurred: she was tired; she had been playing most of the afternoon; Oliver must find another partner; she would sit down in the shade and rest herself. No, the Squire need not stay with her; she did not mind being alone.

"I don't care about playing myself," was Oliver's reply. "Suppose you take my place, Romney. I will just hunt up Miss Waldegrave,—she was sitting in the veranda,—and then I will come back to you, Elsie." But Elsie pretended not to hear this, and when they were out of sight she got up and strolled down a secluded shrubby path that led to the gate. She was tired and over-excited, and longed for a few minutes' solitude. Oliver would soon find her. She was weary of listening to pretty speeches, of feeling herself the cynosure of all eyes. It was delicious to find herself alone with the birds who were twittering round her: the music sounded better when it was softened by the distance. And here Elsie's musings were suddenly checked. She had heard no footstep,—not even the rustle of a dress,—but a turn in the shrubbery brought her face to face with a young girl. Elsie's startled exclamation was faintly re-echoed, and the girl pressed nervously against the hedge. She stammered a sort of frightened apology to Elsie.

"The gate was open, and I walked up the path a little way to listen to the music: it sounded so beautiful, and no one stopped me. I meant no harm."

"You are not one of the guests, then? No, of course not," with a glance at the shabby pink cotton. Elsie's quick eyes had recognized her at once: it was the same young girl who had been choosing books at the library: there was no mistaking the thin, anxious face and the large, wistful blue eyes. She was Mrs. Romney's *protégée*.

"You are doing no harm at all," she went on, with sudden animation. "If you come with me a little farther up this path you will have a view of the house and lawn. No one will see you," as the girl shrunk back in manifest alarm, "and it is such a pretty sight: the children are dancing under the trees, and the lawn is covered with people: you can just peep through the bushes and see it all."

"Are you sure no one will see me?" returned the girl, anxiously, and Elsie again noticed the sweetness of her voice. "I do want to see it all dreadfully,—the lake, and the house,—but I am afraid that I am doing wrong."

"What nonsense!" returned Elsie, with peremptory good nature. "Come with me; I am staying in the house, so no one will question us; the view is only a few yards farther: there is a break in the bushes, and you can see everything." And the girl allowed herself to be persuaded.

She followed Elsie closely, almost holding her breath, as she stole after her with noiseless footsteps. When they had gained their hiding-place, she stood beside her as though she were riveted to the spot.

"How beautiful!" she murmured, presently. "It is far more beautiful than I thought. That lovely lake, and the trees dipping their branches into the water, and that long veranda with all those climbing roses, and all those windows shining like gold. What a great house! And then all those fine people, so grandly dressed! It is like a picture."

"I knew you would be pleased," returned Elsie, in a friendly voice. "The Frythe is a very nice old-fashioned house, but I do not call it grand."

"It seems so to me; but perhaps you are used to fine houses." And here the girl looked at her shyly. This beautifully-dressed young lady was very kind to her, but Elsie only laughed, and played with the flowers in her hand: she carried a posy of loosely-tied roses that Oliver had given her, and that harmonized with her dress.

"You are pulling that lovely rose to pieces!" exclaimed the girl, in a distressed tone. "I am so fond of flowers, and——"

"Eva! what on earth are you doing here?" asked a reproachful voice beside them, and both girls started violently. Mrs. Romney was standing in the path with a perturbed look in her eyes; the girl turned perceptibly paler.

"I only walked a little way up the path to listen to the music," she faltered. "I am very sorry. I meant no harm."

"You must not be angry with her," interposed Elsie, for she thought Mrs. Romney's manner was unnecessarily stern, and the poor child looked terribly frightened. "She was only just inside the gate, and I brought her here to have a peep at the gay scene. She has done no harm at all." But Mrs. Romney's displeasure was not lessened.

"You promised me never to come near the place, Eva," was her severe answer. "You have broken your word. How can I trust you again?" But here the poor girl burst into tears.

"I only wanted to see it once; I——"

"Never mind," returned Mrs. Romney, hastily; "you must go now, and I will talk to you another time." And she put her hand on her arm to enforce her words, but Elsie pushed by her.

"There, you shall have my flowers. Please do not cry; you have done nothing wrong. Mrs. Romney has no right to be so hard with you."

"Go away, Elsie, and leave me to manage my own business." But Mrs. Romney's good humor had returned. "Come, Eva, I will walk with you to the gate: quick, or I shall be missed." Elsie hesitated for a moment, and then she followed them more slowly. "I may as well wait for Mrs. Romney," she said to herself, but before she had gone many yards she changed her mind. Mrs. Romney might be vexed with her: she might consider herself watched. She was about to retrace her steps, when she saw Mrs. Romney stop and put her arms round the girl. "Don't do it again," she heard her say. "No, I am not really angry with you; it was thoughtless, but I forgive you;"

and as she spoke Elsie saw her pass a caressing hand down the fair plait of hair. Elsie turned away quickly, and the next minute she met Oliver.

"So I have caught my bird at last," he said, drawing her hand through his arm. "You wanted to escape me, or you would never have taken refuge in these damp shrubberies: no one ever walks in them. Now I am going to punish you for daring to play me such a trick. Why," with a sudden change of tone, "you have dropped your roses, Elsie. I will go back and look for them." But Elsie stopped him.

"Oh, I am so sorry! I ought not to have done it. I have given away your flowers, Oliver." And then Oliver did look a little surprised.

"I did not want to part with them, and they were so lovely," continued Elsie, apologetically, "but I was so sorry for the poor girl, and Mrs. Romney was so hard on her."

"What girl? Have you been talking to any one?" asked Oliver, with sudden suspicion; and then Elsie related what had happened. Oliver listened silently until she had finished.

"I am glad you gave her the flowers, darling; it was a kind thought; but I am going to ask you not to mention this little occurrence to my mother or Romney. Mrs. Romney is peculiar, and likes to keep her *protégées* to herself; she is very generous, and you can understand——" But here Oliver found it difficult to finish his sentence.

"I never meant to tell any one but you, Oliver. I thought I ought to tell you everything." And this reply was so sweet in Captain Carfax's ear that he changed the whole subject abruptly, and Elsie ceased to regret her impulsive generosity when she found Oliver did not mind.

As they were crossing the lawn to the house a few minutes afterwards, they came upon Mrs. Romney. She was organizing a set of Lancers, and seemed full of animation. She flushed for a moment when she saw Elsie. Then she addressed Oliver. "You must be my partner," she said, with peremptory playfulness. "Romney declares I must open the ball and set the young people an example. Will you spare him to me, Elsie?" And Elsie nodded assent.

She seated herself on one of the benches, and watched them. It struck her that between the figures they talked rather gravely together. By and by Oliver relapsed into his old languid manner, but Mrs. Romney looked hot and tired, and her animation seemed gone. She sat down beside Elsie when the dance was over. "Oliver has not been a bit nice to me," she remarked, rather querulously. "Do you think one's brother-in-law has a right to lecture one? Oliver is always scolding me now, and I find it depressing. I like people to be pleased with me." And Mrs. Romney's eyes looked a little plaintive.

The next moment Gussie and Mr. Lockhart came up to them. Gussie's gentle little mouse-like face was beaming with happiness. Rob looked like a boy who was thoroughly enjoying his holiday.

"Have you had a good time?" asked Mrs. Romney, in a sympa-

thetic voice, and then she added, mischievously, "I heard some one admiring your frock just now. It is certainly one of the prettiest here. You must have a good dress-maker, Gussie." And this speech covered Gussie with confusion.

"Dear Mrs. Romney, how can you?" she said, helplessly, and then her eyes began to brighten. "Ah! I have had such a lovely time! I have never enjoyed myself so much in my life. And Mr. Lockhart has been so kind, he did not mind all my stupid mistakes at tennis."

"Miss Poole only needs assurance," returned Rab, gallantly. "By the bye, Mrs. Romney, we witnessed a very pretty little scene just now. Who was that young lady whom you were consoling so kindly down by the gate? She seemed in trouble, poor thing!"

"I suppose you mean a poor little girl whom I know slightly," returned Mrs. Romney, carelessly. "Ah, here comes my husband: I am afraid I must run away." But Mr. Lockhart detained her:

"I suppose she lives in Draycott: I seem always meeting her: she has fair hair, which she wears in a childish fashion, and she is generally dressed in an old pink frock. I followed her to Church Street once, and——"

"Were you looking for me, Romney? I suppose some of the people are going." And Mrs. Romney took her husband's arm.

"Wait a moment, Kitty: there is no hurry. I want to speak to Rab first." And Mrs. Romney made a little gesture of impatience.

"They were your flowers, Miss Vaughan," Rab was saying, a little pertinaciously; "I could swear to them,—a posy of tea-roses, tied with a gold-colored ribbon."

"Have you lost your flowers, Elsie?" asked the Squire, with surprise, but Mrs. Romney did not wait for her answer.

"What a fuss you are making, Mr. Lockhart!" she said, irritably. "It is very simple. Elsie gave her flowers to a poor girl in whom I am interested; it was very sweet of her, but she certainly did not intend her kindness to be made public.—Don't you hate to hear your good deeds flaunted before your face, Elsie? I agree with the French saying, 'Defend me from my friends; I can defend myself from my enemies.'" And Mrs. Romney's tone was a little haughty.

"I don't understand Mrs. Romney as well as I used," confided Rab to his companion presently: "she is uncertain,—very uncertain." But Gussie's loyalty refused to admit this; Mrs. Romney was simply perfect in her eyes.

"She is the dear—the dearest friend I ever had. No one has ever shown me so much kindness. There is nothing that I would not do for her," finished Gussie, with tremulous zeal. To do Gussie justice, she never changed this opinion of her early friend, and in future days young Mrs. Rab Lockhart often declared to her delighted husband that she owed the happiness of her life to her dear Mrs. Romney. "For you would never have seen me, Rab," she would add, pathetically, "if she had not asked me to the Frythe, and to this day I should have been a poor little drudge of a daily governess if you had not made me the happiest woman in the world."

"Never was there a more suitable marriage," Mrs. Romney would

say to herself when she saw Gussie's beaming face. Rab's pride in his wife was intense; any one but Gussie would have been utterly spoiled; in his simple enthusiasm Rab changed the name of his house to The Dovecot, "for it is so much more expressive than The Hut," observed the little man, in a tone of supreme satisfaction.

CHAPTER XI.

THE DOOR IN THE SHRUBBERY.

More water glideth by the mill
Than wots the miller of.

Titus Andronicus.

LATER on that evening Elsie sat out on the veranda enjoying the still fragrance of the night; behind her was the soft yellow glow of the lamps, and in front the lake shone fitfully under the starlight; and a row of tall white lilies glimmered faintly in the darkness.

Oliver had just left her in response to a summons from his brother, and a moment later Mrs. Romney stepped out on the veranda. As she stood in the circle of brightness Elsie thought she looked like a picture.

She wore a dress of soft amber silk, and her arms gleamed ivory-white under the quaintly-cut sleeves; a moment afterwards she raised them to her head with a childish gesture of weariness that was nevertheless full of grace, and then she sank into the hammock-chair that Oliver had just vacated. "Oh, how tired I am!" she murmured.

"No wonder you are tired," was Elsie's reply. "Oliver says you have done the work of half a dozen women to-day. It is late,—nearly eleven: why do you not go to bed?"

"I hate going to bed unless one is sure to sleep, and I should only lie awake for hours. What an awfully complex thing life is, after all!"

"To me it seems perfectly simple," returned Elsie, cheerfully.

"To you!" with a low laugh: "you innocent little creature, what do you know of life? I was envying you this afternoon, Elsie: you looked like a happy child who had no past."

"Do you mean that you would change places with me?"

"No, indeed!" And, in spite of her fatigue, Mrs. Romney's tone was full of energy. "With all my difficulties, I would not change places with any living woman. Do you suppose that Oliver, with all his goodness, can hold a candle to my Romney? Elsie, have you any idea what he has done for me?" And here her manner changed, and her voice was full of emotion. "He brought happiness into my life, and before I knew him it was full of care."

"Were you so very poor then?" asked Elsie, a little curiously; but Mrs. Romney did not seem to resent the question.

"Yes, horribly poor. If I were not as shabby as Gussie, it was only that my self-respect would not permit me to be shabby. I was too proud to allow my poverty to appear. I would rather have sat up all night to turn an old gown than wear it until it became an eyesore.

Romney told me once soon after we were engaged that I always dressed so well; how I laughed to hear him! and yet I could have cried, too, to think of all my miserable little shifts. Do you know, Elsie, that my husband was obliged to pay for my wedding outfit? Most people would be ashamed to own that; but, with all my pride, I am not a bit ashamed. I delight to owe everything to him." And the glow of feeling on Mrs. Romney's face made her positively beautiful.

"I wonder if I could ever feel like that," murmured Elsie, half to herself, but Mrs. Romney heard her.

"No, don't wonder; we are very different people, and our circumstances are too dissimilar for comparisons. Besides, comparisons are odious things. My life has been an ordeal, and yours has rippled on as smoothly as a little brook. I read once in some book that there were no such things as conflicting duties; that the term was an anomaly,—almost an impossibility; but I differ from this; it seems to me that most of the misery of life comes from the effort to reconcile conflicting duties."

"Oliver would disagree with you there," began Elsie, but Mrs. Romney interrupted her almost impatiently:

"Please don't quote Oliver; he is a severe critic; he has such terribly hard-and-fast rules: he declares a well-balanced mind can always discern the right path, that there can be but one right and one wrong, and that it is the endeavor to act Providence that so often leads us astray."

"I almost think Oliver is right."

"He is right in a way, but he does not discriminate. Elsie, I am afraid I shall shock your innocence, but do you think it is possible to be true—absolutely true—in this world?"

"Most certainly I do." And Elsie's tone was somewhat distressed.

"That shows your simplicity, child. I do not want to shock you; I have never told a lie—a real lie—in my life, and I hope that I never shall, but all the same one has to act it sometimes."

"No, no."

"I tell you yes; and then it is not possible to be always strictly accurate. I saw you were a little surprised this afternoon when I told Rab that I knew that child slightly. I am very quick, and I could see from your manner that you thought I was misleading him; but he had no right to be so inquisitive. I was merely on the defensive against unwarrantable curiosity."

"I can understand that."

"Oh, but you thought me hard to her; but you cannot judge, Elsie. I have been very kind to her; I was her best friend, but she was wrong to disobey me. I never allow my *protégées* or pensioners to come to the house; it is really my mother-in-law's house: all my good deeds are done by stealth. She ought to have respected my wishes."

"She is very young," pleaded Elsie.

"She is nearly fifteen, and circumstances should have made her older than she is, but she is lamentably childish: she is a tender plant that needs sunshine to thrive." And here she sighed, and then abruptly changed the subject; but a little later, when Elsie was bidding her

good-night, she looked at her rather pathetically. "Don't distrust me if you can help it, dear. I try to be as good as I can, and I never want to do wrong." And then she gave an odd little laugh and left her.

Two or three days passed. Gussie had gone back to her home, on the understanding that the visit was shortly to be repeated, and Elsie and Oliver spent their time riding about the country or playing tennis with their neighbors.

One wet afternoon they had betaken themselves to the billiard-room for amusement, and had indulged afterwards in a game of shuttlecock and battledoor, in which Mrs. Romney had joined them; and Sir Henry had had his chair wheeled into the corridor, that he might watch the players.

The rain ceased towards evening, and after dinner they all gathered in the veranda while Mrs. Romney sang to them.

By and by the Squire strolled off to his smoking-room, and Oliver went in search of a book he was reading. Elsie, left to herself, went down the veranda step and sauntered aimlessly down one of the paths. The clouds had broken, and a faint watery moon just showed itself; the air was sweet with the scent of lilies, and Elsie was enjoying the freshness, when she suddenly started: a dark figure had glided from the bushes and crossed her path; but the next moment her courage returned: it was a woman, probably one of the servants who had been sent on some errand and was returning to the house, and she was about to pass her, when a gleam of fair hair caught her eyes, and in spite of the disguising waterproof she recognized the young girl whom Mrs. Romney had called Eva.

"Is it you?" she exclaimed, in some natural surprise. "Are you wanting to see any one?"

"Yes, please," in an eager whisper. "I must see Catherine—I mean Mrs. Romney. Would you bring her to me? Oh, I know," clasping her hands with a gesture of distress, "she was very angry when she saw me looking at the dancing the other day; she said I had no right to be here; but—but—I must speak to her. I have walked all this way in the rain to let her know."

"To let her know what? Don't be afraid: I will do anything I can to help you. But how wet you are!—dreadfully wet; and you look so tired! and, oh, dear, you have been crying!" for a sudden gleam of moonlight showed her the poor girl's swollen eyes; but the genuine kindness of Elsie's tone only set the tears flowing again.

"Please forgive me. I cannot help crying, I am so tired and miserable, and I want Catherine: please, please will you tell her when no one is near that I am here, and that I must speak to her? I have been here ever so long listening to her singing, and I could not help crying to think how sorry she would be if she knew I was standing outside in the wet."

"I will go to her at once. Don't fret any more. I will tell her not to be angry. But I hear footsteps: some one is looking for me." And the girl glided swiftly behind some shrubs.

"What are you doing, Elsie, in that damp place?" and Mrs. Rom-

ney's voice was somewhat sharp. "I heard voices. To whom were you talking?—Oh, Eva," with a start, as the girl, reassured, stepped out of her hiding-place. "How can you—how dare you try me in this way?"

"I could not help it, Catherine: you must not be angry; he is very ill, and I was so frightened that I was obliged to come to you. I thought he was dying, and——"

"Elsie, dear," and Mrs. Romney's voice was singularly agitated, "please go back to the house and try and find Oliver; tell him to come to the door in the shrubbery; he will find me there; but on no account let my husband know; he will be angry with me for exposing myself to this damp; but you see for yourself this poor child is in trouble, and I must help her,—I must."

Elsie ran back to the house at once, but, to her dismay, the Squire had reappeared with his cigar, and he and Oliver were having an argument in the veranda. Oliver gave her a nod, as much as to say, "Please do not interrupt us," but the Squire hardly noticed her.

What was to be done? They were in the heat of a political discussion: a remark had brought on the dispute: the Squire had his paper in his hand, and had just quoted a paragraph, and Oliver had retorted contemptuously that the statesman in question was an old woman and that his information was unreliable, and the Squire had fired up in a moment.

Elsie was in despair. Oliver was not generally dense, but the subject interested him, and he was slow to take her hints when she tried to attract his attention. He thought it was girlish coquetry, and only gave her an affectionate smile. She was quite at her wits' end to know what to do, until a happy idea came to her, and five minutes later Oliver found a folded slip of paper between his fingers: in the obscure light she had pushed it unnoticed into his hand.

This had the desired effect, and the next moment Oliver strolled to the window under the pretext of relighting his cigar. When he read Elsie's scrawl, his manner changed:

"Mrs. Romney wants to speak to you. She is by the door in the shrubbery. That girl is with her."

"I have got stiff with sitting. I think I will have a prowl," he observed, casually, when he rejoined them.

"I will take a turn with you," replied his brother, amiably, and Oliver and Elsie exchanged glances. Oliver raised his eyebrows: it was impossible to shake off the Squire when he was in a mood for argument. "There's no help for it," he muttered, as he went down the steps.

Elsie watched them until they were out of sight, and then she ran quickly down the shrubbery path: her footsteps were so light on the grass border that she reached them unperceived.

They were standing beside the half-open door that led into the road. Mrs. Romney's arms were round the girl, and Eva's face was hidden on her shoulder, and Mrs. Romney's voice was as tender as though she were speaking to her child:

"You must not lose courage, darling. Think what a comfort you are to me."

"But there is so little I can do," sobbed the girl. "All day long it is the same thing over and over again: 'Do you think Catherine will come?' 'I want Catherine!'—it breaks my heart to hear him."

"You are breaking mine when you tell me that. Dearest, there is nothing for us but patience.—Ah, Elsie," in a flurried tone, "how you startled me! Have you come to tell us that you cannot find Oliver?"

"Mr. Carfax is with him. I wrote your message on a bit of paper, but he cannot come just yet."

"Then there is only one thing to be done. You must go home, Eva, and trust me to do what I can for you. You will be brave, you will not be afraid," looking at the girl anxiously; but Eva recoiled with visible alarm at the sight of the dark road that lay beyond the gate.

"Oh, how dark it is! I am almost afraid to let go your hand, Catherine. Must I go all that way alone?"

"My darling, there is no help for it. Would I let you go alone if I could help it? But there is nothing to fear; these country roads are so safe. Pluck up your courage, dear; nothing will hurt you. I will stand here until you are safely round that dark corner and you can see the village. Walk out boldly: no one will speak to you."

"If I am frightened I shall run. Don't laugh at me, Catherine: I am not brave like you."

"I am not brave at all, my sweet," kissing her. "Now go, go, or my husband will hear us." She put her gently outside the gate, and stood there listening anxiously to the faltering, uneven footsteps. She had quite forgotten Elsie's existence. "Poor child!" she murmured to herself; "my poor frightened little Eva!" and she quite started when Elsie's voice sounded close to her.

"What does it all mean, Mrs. Romney? How fond you seem of that girl!"

"Yes, I am fond of her," she answered, rather shortly. "I love all young helpless things, and Eva is so terribly sensitive: she had a bad illness once, and a fright, and her nerves have never recovered it. Now help me to regain the house without my husband discovering me, or I shall be lectured severely for my imprudence." But, though Mrs. Romney tried to laugh, there was no mirth in her voice, and the laugh ended in a long-drawn sigh.

CHAPTER XII.

"WILL YOU DO ME A FAVOR?"

What, what, what! ill luck, ill luck!

Merchant of Venice.

ELSIE returned to her room that night in a sorely perplexed frame of mind.

In spite of her youth and ignorance of the world, she could no longer shut her eyes to the fact that some strange secret was connected with the mysterious visit of this young girl, and that notwithstanding Mrs. Romney's seeming frankness she was not acting in a perfectly

straightforward manner. Eva was no ordinary *protégée*, no mere recipient of a large-hearted bounty, Elsie was quite sure of that: the passionate tenderness of Mrs. Romney's tones still rang in her ears: "You must not lose courage, darling! think what a comfort you are to me!" and again, "Poor child! my poor frightened little Eva!" Why was she so anxious to shield her from her husband's notice? what could all this secrecy mean? and why was Oliver her confidant? It was this latter point that troubled her. Oliver was surely the last person in the world to give his sanction or countenance to any unworthy concealment; in her heart Elsie knew that she could trust him blindly, but all the same the mystery fretted and baffled her.

It was no use going to bed; she was far too wide awake. For a long time she waited, hoping that Mrs. Romney would come to her and offer some sort of explanation for her extraordinary behavior; but more than an hour passed and she gave no sign. She tried to read, but the least sound attracted her attention and made her lay down the book. Why was Oliver sitting up so late? he generally went to bed long before this. She could hear the Squire going his rounds, and then footsteps passed her door; to her relief, Oliver was with him: she could distinctly hear his voice, lowered purposely so as not to disturb her.

"Good-night, old fellow; pleasant dreams to you;" but the Squire's reply was not audible.

Elsie took the book again: she was not sleepy yet, and she might as well finish the chapter; it proved interesting, and she read another, and then she gave a sudden start; footsteps were passing her door again, the door opposite unclosed softly. A sudden overwhelming curiosity made Elsie open hers, and the subdued sound of voices reached her ear. Who could be talking at this late hour? Was Harry ill, and had his nurse summoned Mrs. Romney? This thought made Elsie venture out into the corridor, but the nursery door was fast shut, and the sound proceeded evidently from the staircase. The next moment she was peeping over the balustrade. To her intense chagrin, she saw Mrs. Romney, still in her evening dress, with a shawl thrown over her, talking to Oliver.

But it was Oliver's appearance that surprised her most. He had changed his clothes, and was in his light tweed morning suit, and his hat was in his hand. It was long past midnight, and yet he was going out. Elsie could bear no more, and, without stopping to consider what they would think of her, she ran noiselessly down the stairs. Mrs. Romney gave a faint shriek when she saw the little white figure flash suddenly into sight, but Oliver, with hardly a change of countenance, put out his hand to her. He looked grave and more impassive than ever.

"What is the matter?" asked Elsie, breathlessly. "Why are you going out? Is any one ill?" and then, as Oliver did not at once reply, she turned to Mrs. Romney a little angrily: "Why are you sending him out? It is your fault. You are always making him do things, and he does not like it."

"Why should you interfere, Elsie? You will spoil everything. Go to bed, like a good girl, and leave me to manage my own business."

Oliver is doing me a great kindness: he is a dear good fellow." Mrs. Romney spoke excitedly, but there was no temper in her tone: she was putting Elsie off as though she were a child, and the girl resented it.

"It is cruel of you to send him out in the middle of the night! What is the reason of all this mystery?—Oliver, why don't you answer me? I have a right to know. You are not treating me well, you and Mrs. Romney."

"No, darling, we are not, and you have every right to reprove us." And Oliver tightened his hold of the little hands, and looked at her quietly.—"Catherine, you are making trouble between me and Elsie with these foolish mysteries: you are risking not only your own peace, but ours. Let me put a stop to it by telling her the truth."

"Not to-night! oh, no, Oliver! I have your promise, and I cannot release you to-night! If Elsie loves you she will trust you. Why are you wasting time with all this nonsense? At any moment Romney may wake and miss me." And she almost wrung her hands with impatience.

"You hear what Catherine says, Elsie: she will not allow me to clear myself." But Elsie, touched to the heart by the suppressed pain of his voice, interrupted him:

"Don't look so troubled, Oliver. It is not your fault; I am sure of that. Nothing shall make mischief between us. I trust you; I know you are true as steel. There, go, go, if you must." And she was turning away, but he caught her almost passionately in his arms.

"I will never forget this! Thanks a thousand times, my darling, my loyal darling!—Come and let me out at the conservatory door, Catherine, and let me get this business over.—Go back to your room, Elsie, and sleep as sweetly as you deserve to sleep."

Elsie retraced her steps, and went swiftly to her window: it overlooked the path that led from the conservatory. The next moment Oliver passed, and waved his hand in recognition, but he did not speak. She stood there for a few moments lost in thought, until the sound of her own door opening made her turn her head as Mrs. Romney came hurriedly into the room. She looked pale and worried, and spoke in a hesitating manner:

"I am very sorry, Elsie. I would not pain you or Oliver for worlds, but I cannot help myself to-night. You were very dear and good to him, and he has gone off quite happily. You are a generous-hearted girl."

Elsie drew up her white chin a little proudly.

"Nothing can make me distrust Oliver," she said, coldly.

Mrs. Romney looked at her rather sadly.

"No, you only distrust me; you think I have no right to have secrets from my husband. Ah, you cannot judge. One day perhaps you will be more lenient. I cannot stop now, Elsie; Romney may wake any minute. He thinks I am with Harry; the child was a little feverish to-night, so I told him I should not undress yet. I wish you could have said something kind to me: my heart is heavy enough as it is." And here she suddenly broke down and sobbed in a distressing

manner. "Oh, my poor head!" she said, "my poor tired head!" and she laid it against the dressing-table.

This sudden loss of self-control frightened Elsie, and, forgetting her own grievances, she knelt down by Mrs. Romney and begged her to be calm, and in a few minutes she raised her head and began drying her eyes.

"No, it is no use crying; nothing can relieve me to-night. I have a dead weight here, Elsie," touching her chest, "a sickening dead weight, and it hurts me. Things are coming to a crisis, and I shall be undone. I have done no wrong in my Maker's eyes, but all the same I shall be undone. There, let me go: you are very kind, but it is impossible for you to help me. If it were not for Oliver I should go mad."

"I am very sorry for you," returned Elsie, mechanically; but Mrs. Romney made no answer: she stood for a moment with the shawl dropping from her shoulders and leaving her white neck uncovered, so that Elsie could see the piteous quivering in the muscles of the throat. Then she turned silently to the door, opened and then closed it noiselessly, and Elsie was left alone. The air had become damp and chilly, and the candles were getting in the draught. Elsie hastily undressed, and extinguished them. She meant to lie awake and watch for Oliver's return, but before ten minutes had elapsed she was fast asleep, and only the maid's busy movements about her room roused her the next morning.

The first person she saw when she went down-stairs was Oliver. He came out of the conservatory with some roses, his usual morning offering to his young betrothed, and put them in her hand silently. Elsie looked at him rather anxiously: he seemed fagged and tired.

"Were you out long, Oliver?" she whispered.

"I have only just returned," was his reply. "Don't wait for me, Elsie: I must have my tub before breakfast. Mrs. Romney is in there," pointing to the dining-room; and he hurried off, to prevent further questions.

Mrs. Romney was sorting the letters at the side table. She beckoned quickly to Elsie. She looked as though she had not slept all night, and her voice spoke of some terrible strain. "Elsie, will you do me a favor? It is urgent. Think of something you need in Draycott, that you must have without fail, and ask me to drive you in. Hush! I hear Romney's voice." And she turned again to the letters.

"I must have some more yellow floss silk for my work, and I can only match it myself," returned Elsie, very naturally, as the Squire entered, but she stifled a sudden impatience as she spoke. More mysteries,—more underhand plans: she was growing weary of them. "I suppose one can match silks in Draycott?"

"Oh, dear, yes. I will drive you there as soon as I have given cook her orders."

"Eh, what? shopping again, Mrs. Kitty? Why should you fash yourself with driving into Draycott this hot morning? Elsie can go with me in the dog-cart. I have nothing on earth to do, and you have had a bad night with Harry."

"A drive will do me good, Romney," pleaded his wife,— "will it not, Elsie? There is nothing like fresh air for picking one up."

"That is what I always say," returned Elsie, quickly. "A good ride after a ball does one all the good in the world. I hope you will come with me, Mrs. Romney, for I want your advice about a smock for Harry; I have promised to make him one."

Mrs. Romney flashed a grateful look at her, and her hand trembled as she poured out the coffee. "I should like to come with you, dear," she said, gently; and the Squire, who was in a high good humor over his letters, only rallied her for her obstinacy and self-will, and the subject dropped until Oliver entered the room, when the Squire casually observed that the ladies were driving in to Draycott. Oliver fixed his eyes inquiringly on his sister-in-law, but she gave him a quick sign, and he asked no questions until he found himself alone with Elsie.

"Are you sure you do not mind, Elsie?"

"I mind very much," was her candid answer: "I hate the very name of Draycott; but Mrs. Romney begged me to do her this favor. Oh, I hope we shall not be long."

"I am afraid you will, poor little Elsie. You are being martyred between us. I never loved you as I did last night: I must tell you that now, darling." And Oliver managed to say a good deal more, until Elsie's cheek burnt with his praises, and she drove off blushing like a rose and quite oblivious of Mrs. Romney's harassed looks.

Neither of them felt any inclination for conversation, and not a word was spoken until the tower of St. Mary's came in sight, and then Mrs. Romney leaned forward in the wagonette and said, hurriedly,—

"I have asked Archer to put me down at the corner of Church Street. You can do your shopping without me, I know. Be as long as you can. Why not go to the library and order some new books? Do not come for me for at least an hour. I will join you as soon as I am ready."

Elsie nodded, and proceeded to carry out her instructions; but she never found it so difficult to while away an hour. She matched her silks, and then went to the library; then she discovered that she was hungry and would like a bun, and Archer had orders to drive her to the best confectioner's. She had provided herself with an ice and a Bath bun, when her enjoyment was marred by the entrance of Mr. Lockhart; he spied her at once, and a beaming smile came over his face.

"Well, this is luck!" he said, exultingly, as he shook hands. "I was looking out for you ladies. I called at the Frythe to see if I could do any errands for any one, and the Squire volunteered to drive in with me; he is at the club, reading the papers, but he told me to look out for the wagonette, as he means to drive back with you. What have you done with Mrs. Romney?"

"She has some business. I shall call for her presently," stammered Elsie. "When did you say the Squire would be ready for us?"

"Oh, in about a quarter of an hour. You are to drive to the club for him. By the bye, Miss Vaughan, I met Miss Poole in Hart Street," and here the little man's face became alarmingly pink: "she

looked like a ghost, and seemed as down as possible; that step-mother of hers had been bullying her. I suppose," clearing his throat with difficulty, "that Mrs. Romney has not invited her again to the Frythe; it would do her a world of good, I am quite sure of that."

"I will tell Mrs. Romney what you say: Miss Poole is a great favorite of hers, and she is always so sorry for her. She is a very nice girl. I like her very much." Elsie hardly knew what she said; she was dying to get rid of Mr. Lockhart, but the little man stuck to her pertinaciously. He plied her with questions; did she not think Miss Poole an exceedingly amiable person, intelligent too? oh, yes, he was quite sure that she was intelligent; she read Carlyle and Ruskin, and then she was devoted to poetry, and—well, he must confess he had a sneaking fancy for the old-fashioned poets himself,—Pope's "Rape of the Lock," for example, could anything be more racy and delightful than Belinda's toilet? He begged pardon; he feared he was delaying Miss Vaughan; for Elsie had at last risen in desperation.

"I must go. I shall be late," she said, hurriedly. "Please do not come with me, Mr. Lockhart." But Rab was not to be shunted in that way; he handed Elsie into the wagonette with elaborate politeness, and stood bareheaded on the pavement until he received her parting smile. Elsie could only hope that her direction to drive to Church Street was not overheard. She looked up at the market clock as they drove past: in six or seven minutes the Squire would be standing in front of the club, looking out for them. There was only one thing to do: she must go herself to No. 27 and warn Mrs. Romney; there was no other course open to her; and directly the wagonette stopped she let herself out and ran down the street.

The door was open. Elsie knocked softly, and then louder, but, to her surprise, no one came; and after a minute's irresolution she stepped into the narrow passage and peeped into the shabby little sitting-room. It was quite empty, and looked as though it had been unoccupied for weeks: the colored antimacassars hung in faultless folds; some smart-looking books were ranged at equal distances round the centre-table; no one seemed moving about the kitchen except a black cat, who mewed at Elsie in rather a dismal fashion, but a faint creaking overhead attracted her attention.

Elsie was at her wits' end; but at last, in desperation, she began to ascend the narrow steep flight of stairs. As she did so, the shabby frayed druggeting attracted her attention: the people who lived here must be dreadfully poor, she thought; but the next moment she gave a violent start. Mrs. Romney's voice sounded quite close to her: it proceeded from a room just opposite the staircase.

"Give me the wine, Eva: he is getting faint again. Oh, why, why does not Dr. Evans come? Father, father dear, you must drink this: it is Catherine who is giving it to you."

Elsie held her breath and crept to the door. That agonized voice made her shiver. Mrs. Romney's back was towards her: she was kneeling beside the bed, and supporting a gray-haired man in her arms. Elsie had a glimpse of the worn, emaciated features, then Eva's fair head obstructed her view.

"Drink it, daddy," she said, in a sobbing voice, but a wasted hand waved it away.

"It is poisoned," returned the invalid, in a hollow voice. "She said she would do for me. She is the curse of my life, and she is killing me slowly every day. Catherine," rousing up with fitful energy, "don't let her come here; hide me away from her. And hide Eva, too; she is cruel to Eva; I saw the bruises on the child's arm myself. When she drinks she is like a fury, and she hates us both."

"There is no one here, father, but Eva and your own Kitty. No one shall hurt you, never again, never again. 'He shall wipe the tears off from all faces,'—do you remember those words, dear? from yours,—from mine when in His good time I shall have earned my rest. See, I am tasting the wine, and it is good, for it comes from my husband's cellar. Now you will take it, like a dear good father, for your poor Catherine's sake."

"Mrs. Romney," Elsie's voice almost breathed into her ear, and Mrs. Romney's white face turned on her full of startled indignation.

"You here? How dare you intrude on my privacy?" Her voice was purposely lowered, but her gray eyes flashed with anger. The old man clutched her convulsively:

"Who is that, Catherine? Send her away. I will see no one."

"It is a friend, father," her voice melting into tenderness. "She has a good heart, and will not do us any harm.—Go away, Elsie. You see how it is: I cannot and will not leave my father."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE SQUIRE IS MASTERFUL.

Thank God, bless God, all ye who suffer not
More grief than ye can weep for. That is well
That is light grieving.

E. B. BROWNING.

MRS. ROMNEY pronounced these words with a sort of feverish determination, but Elsie stooped down and whispered in her ear,—

"You must leave him. The Squire is in the town; Mr. Lockhart told me so; he is at the club, expecting us. He intends to drive back in the wagonette."

"Romney at his club?" She gasped out the words with incredulous dismay.

"Yes, and at this very minute he will be looking for us. Mrs. Romney, you must come." And Catherine, with a dazed look, rose from her knees.

"That is why you are here to warn me. Thank you, Elsie.—Father dear, I must leave you for a little while." But the sick man detained her: a terrified expression came into his sunken eyes.

"You must not leave me. I will not be left with the child. What is she to do, if that woman comes? She will take away the doctor's stuff and drink the wine: that is what she did when poor little Eva was ill. Kitty, if you go away you will be an unnatural daughter.

What! leave your poor dying father! Shame, shame on you, Catherine!"

"Hush, father! you are cruel to agitate yourself in this way,—cruel to me and Eva. You shall not be alone long. The nurse Oliver saw will be here directly, and Dr. Evans promised to look in again."

"I will not have them. You know my dislike to strangers. I will have no one about me but you. Why must you leave me, Kitty? Surely your husband is not so unforgiving as to keep us apart now I am dying."

"Father, you are breaking my heart!" And Mrs. Romney kissed the gray head almost despairingly. "You are not dying; you shall not die. Let me go, and I will come soon again." And she tore herself away.

"Must you really go, Catherine?" and Eva stole timidly to her side; "he is really worse, and——"

"No, no; the wine has given him strength. Go back to him and talk to him cheerfully. You have nothing to fear, darling; Nurse Miriam will be with you directly.—Now, Elsie." And she led the way down-stairs.

"We are very late," Elsie murmured, as they took their places.

"Late, are we?" with a sudden look of alarm. "Elsie, you must help me with Romney, for I am almost worn out. Tell me," with sudden agitation, "do you think that he—my father is dying? I have never seen any one die."

"He looks very ill," returned Elsie, cautiously, but in her secret heart she felt the old man's days were numbered; she had no time to say more, for the Squire's tall figure was in sight, and, to Elsie's dismay, Rab Lockhart was with him. The little man seemed ubiquitous.

"Have we kept you waiting, dear?" asked Mrs. Romney, trying to speak in her usual manner, but her voice was hardly under control.

"Kept me waiting?" returned the Squire, wrathfully. "Are you aware I have been kicking up my heels in this blazing sun for the last half-hour? Rab tells me he gave my message to Elsie nearly three-quarters of an hour ago."

"Oh, yes, we got your message, but we had not finished all our business.—How do you do, Mr. Lockhart? are you waiting there in the hope of seeing Gussie pass?—Jump in, Romney; it is no use waiting any longer." But the Squire, who for once was out of temper, considered this speech as only an aggravation of the offence.

"Upon my word, Catherine, you are a cool hand! You might have the grace to say you are sorry for keeping me waiting.—No, thanks," as Rab with good-natured officiousness opened the door: "I shall take the reins from Archer." And with a decidedly sulky look and the air of a martyr the Squire mounted the box.

Catherine drew a long sigh of relief, but she spoke no word, but Rab whispered confidentially, "He'll be as sweet as a nut when he has had his luncheon and a pipe;" but the words were almost jerked out of his mouth, for the Squire had touched up Jess and Jasper so smartly that they curveted wildly and then dashed across the market-place.

Elsie gave a little cry of alarm, and Rab stood in the middle of the

road, looking after them anxiously; but he need not have troubled himself: the Squire was a splendid whip, and his spirited horses were entirely under his control.

Mrs. Romney leaned back in her corner. Her hands were clasped on her lap, and her eyes were full of tears. "He is vexed with me," she said, as though to herself, "and I do not wonder at it."

But the Squire could not long keep up his grievance, and his displeasure soon evaporated. Before many minutes were over he was carrying on a jerky conversation with Elsie over his shoulder, and by and by there was an admonition to Kitty to look out sharp at something. Mrs. Romney, who was crying silently behind her sunshade, tried to answer him, but her words failed to reach him. "Tell him the sun has made my head ache," she whispered, and Elsie repeated the message. But this harmless excuse only fanned the slumbering embers of his wrath again. Any ailment of his Kitty, however trifling, was a serious matter in his eyes.

"Another headache?" he muttered, and then he suddenly checked the horses just as they were passing a large red brick house, and Archer was despatched to the gate with a message.

Mrs. Romney got up from her seat in a hurry:

"Why have you sent Archer to Dr. Fergusson, Romney?"

"Because I wish him to look in some time this afternoon," returned her husband, coolly. "I have heard enough of these headaches, and I intend him to take you in hand properly. You have not been yourself for the last two or three weeks, and I shall ask him to put you to rights."

"You are very absurd, Romney. I am perfectly well, and Dr. Fergusson will only laugh at us both." But the Squire made no answer to this, and Catherine gave a weary little sigh as she went back to her corner. She knew too well that it was useless to contend with Romney when he was in one of these masterful moods, but the idea of being restrained and treated as an invalid was galling in the extreme.

Catherine was in that painful state of intense nervous tension when even a louder voice than usual made her tremble from head to foot: she could eat no luncheon, and made her headache a pretext for retiring from the table.

"I hope you consider that I have done a wise thing in asking Dr. Fergusson to call," observed her husband as he opened the door for her, but a few minutes later he followed her to her room.

Strange to say, the strong big man had the thoughtfulness and light touch of a woman in a sick-room. His irritation had died a natural death the moment he saw Catherine was really suffering, though he had no idea that it was mental and not bodily pain that made her contract her forehead and clench her delicate hands. He shaded the windows carefully, and arranged the pillows on her couch, then he helped her unloosen the heavy braids of hair that seemed to oppress her. As he did so she suddenly drew his hand to her lips. "Oh, my darling," she whispered, "love me, love me always as well as you do now, or I could not live." But the Squire frowned, as though this little outburst displeased him.

"Now you are hysterical again," he said, in rather a repressive voice. "My dear child, I insist on your keeping yourself quiet until Fergusson comes. He will soon put you to rights. Shut your eyes, and try to sleep. I shall go down-stairs and keep the house as quiet as possible." But she caught hold of his coat-sleeve.

"Have you forgiven me, have you quite forgiven me, for keeping you waiting?"

"Forgiven? Nonsense!" and he kissed her forehead; "but I shall be angry with you in earnest if you say another word." And the Squire crept noiselessly out of the room; but his honest heart would have been wrung if he could have seen Catherine lying face downward on the couch, trying to control her sobs.

"If I have done wrong, if I have been weak, cowardly, it was because I loved you too much," she moaned, "because I dared not let you know my disobedience. Oh, God help me, what shall I do, what shall I do if he ever finds out that I have deceived him?"

Elsie had not yet found herself alone with Oliver. Some visitors had driven over after luncheon, and Lady Carfax had needed their presence in the drawing-room. Before they left Dr. Fergusson paid his visit, but it was some time before Romney joined them.

He seemed in rather a perturbed state of mind. Oliver had just left the room on some errand or other, and Elsie and Lady Carfax were alone.

"Well, Romney, what does Dr. Fergusson say about Catherine?" asked Lady Carfax, tranquilly. She did not herself think that there was much amiss with her daughter-in-law, only if Catherine's finger ached Romney made a fuss.

"He says that her nerves are in a most unsatisfactory state," returned her son, gloomily,— "that she is suffering from some mental pressure or strain. He saw her alone, and he assures me that he questioned her very closely, and that he is convinced that she has something on her mind, and, though she would not allow this, she did not exactly contradict him."

"What an absurd idea!" returned Lady Carfax, impatiently. "I hope you told him that Catherine was the happiest creature in the world. Her spirits are excellent. Why, she is the life of the house. No, no: she has been doing too much, and is a little below par. She wants a tonic to set her up."

"I wish I could agree with you, mother; but it seems to me that Catherine has flagged lately, and her spirits certainly have not been as good as usual. Don't you remember that evening when she was so hysterical? and she has been shedding tears more than once. She is irritable, too. I wonder," with a worried expression, "if anything can be troubling her!"

"Troubling her? Of course not," with the utmost scorn, for Lady Carfax had scant sympathy with nerves. "You are well, and Harry is well, and the servants do their duty: what should trouble a strong, healthy, happy young woman? I always said Dr. Fergusson is an alarmist; he always takes the worst view of your poor father's case. Well, what does he advise? what remedies does he intend to prescribe?"

"Oh, he says there is little to be done. He will send her some quieting medicine and a sleeping-draught for to-night. She is to rest as much as possible, and to avoid fatigue and late hours, and to take a little gentle exercise every day."

"And what made him come so late?"

"Oh, he said Evans wanted him to see a bad case in the town,—a stranger who had lately come to Draycott: it is a singular case of pressure on the brain; besides other complications, he seems to have a fancy that some woman—his wife, I think he said—was poisoning him. Fergusson seems to think it is a case for a lunatic asylum, only he is evidently too ill to be moved."

"Whom on earth are you talking about, Romney?" asked Oliver, who had just entered the room and had overheard the last words.

"Only a patient of Dr. Evans's,—I think the name was Frith, or Smith,—down in Church Street. The saddest part seems to be that there is quite a young daughter, a frightened nervous little creature, not a bit fit to attend such a case; but they are sending a nurse from the hospital."

"Elsie, will you come out for a stroll?" asked Oliver, abruptly, and the girl rose immediately. "Oh, Oliver, I have wanted to speak to you so badly!" she exclaimed, as they descended the grass slope towards the lake, "and I thought those stupid people would never go. I wanted to tell you that I have seen him,—Mrs. Romney's father; and what—what does it all mean?" facing round on the astonished young man.

Oliver uttered an exclamation; then he drew her hand through his arm. "There is no hurry," he said, coolly; "we have two hours before us. I will row you out into the middle of the lake, and you shall tell me everything from the beginning." And Elsie was soon in the midst of her narration. She had an excellent listener; Oliver never interrupted her by word or comment; now and then his oar splashed idly in the water; but when she had finished a look of relief came to his face.

"The secret is out," he said, quietly. "Now there is no irritating mystery between us. Yes, poor Mr. Vincent is very ill. I was sitting up with him last night, so I ought to know."

"But, Oliver—"

"Well, darling?"

"You must begin to talk now. I want to know the reason of all this secrecy. Why does Mrs. Romney keep her father's illness a secret from her husband?"

"I suppose the swans won't betray us if I take you into confidence; you have been a good child, Elsie, and you deserve your reward; Catherine cannot blame me if I tell you things now, as you know the main facts of the case. She has made a great mistake in keeping it dark from Romney. Romney is a generous fellow, and he would have helped her to the best of his ability, and if I do not mistake she will pay dearly for her weakness."

"Oh, Oliver, I hope not."

"I hope so too; but we Carfax men are a stiff-necked generation:

we believe in sturdy old-fashioned honesty and straightforward plain ways. I love you dearly, Elsie, as you know well, and when you are my wife I shall hope to love you a hundred times more, but if you disobeyed my express commands and acted in opposition to my wishes without giving me warning that the pressure of circumstances obliged you to do so, I should consider that my confidence was betrayed and that you were acting in an underhand way, and I fear—I very much fear—that you would forfeit my respect.”

“Oh, no, Oliver! pray do not tell me that there is any fear of Mrs. Romney’s losing her husband’s respect.”

“No, dear, I will tell you nothing; I will just put the circumstances before you, and you shall judge for yourself: there is plenty of sense in that pretty little head. And, mind, although I blame Mrs. Romney, I am heartily sorry for her, too. She has had a hard life of it, poor woman!”

CHAPTER XIV.

CATHERINE.

I am not fair, and therefore
I pray the gods make me honest.

SHAKESPEARE.

OLIVER paused a moment, as though he were in doubt where to begin, and Elsie seized the opportunity to ask him another question:

“Just tell me one thing. How long have you been Mrs. Romney’s confidant?” but Oliver shook his head at her reprovingly.

“That is so like a woman: the feminine mind always wants to know the end before the beginning. You must allow me to tell my story in my own way, or it will never be told at all.” And, thus rebuked, Elsie held her peace. Oliver could be masterful too when he chose: the Carfax brothers certainly possessed dominant wills.

“I told you how Romney and Catherine first met,” he went on, looking at her inquiringly, and Elsie nodded, “and how my dearly-beloved brother took his own wilful way and disappointed his hosts by declining to fall in love with their handsome daughter, and how he courted the governess instead, but I have not told you that Catherine was hard to win.

“You know what a good-looking fellow Romney is: though I am his own brother, I declare I don’t know a man to compare with him; and he has a kindly chivalrous way with women that wins their hearts. You may imagine his surprise and chagrin, then, at the quietly decided manner in which Catherine repelled his advances. He used to come to my diggings—you know the Firs was only three or four miles from Aldershot—looking quite down and miserable. I never saw a fellow so much in love in my life until I met a certain young person at a certain ball, and then I knew how it felt; but in spite of my want of experience I was very sorry for Romney.

“He used to drop into my favorite hammock-chair with a sigh that almost blew me away.

“‘It is no use,’ he would say; ‘she keeps me at arm’s length and

avoids me as much as possible; she used to be quite friendly at first, but ever since I sent her those flowers she seems afraid to let me come near her; if I speak to her in the drawing-room of an evening she walks off to the piano and asks one of the boys to turn over her leaves for her; she will never let me do that for her if she can help it, ever since the night I told her that her voice haunted me.'

"'You may depend upon it, it is pure cussedness,' I would tell him. 'Miss Vincent may be a very superior young woman, but I dare say she is not different from the rest of her sex: she is just trying it on a bit.'

"'You are quite wrong,' he returned, warmly; 'she has no nonsense of that sort, and—and, in spite of her seeming coldness, I am convinced she is not as indifferent as she would have me believe,' and here Romney grew very red. 'Once or twice I have seen her change color when I have come upon her unexpectedly, and—well, you will know for yourself one day, old fellow, what these little things mean,' but I am afraid I laughed derisively at this.

"The next day he came he brought me an invitation from Mrs. Trafford. I was to dine and sleep at the Firs. They were very hospitable people, and there were other marriageable daughters besides Felicia."

"Oh, Oliver! how can you be so wicked?"

"My dear little girl, I had had all my innocence knocked out of me early in life. I was quite a shy fellow until the young ladies taught me to flirt; and then, I own, I was an apt pupil. I had not quite completed my education in this respect, for I tried to back out, much to Romney's disgust.

"'You might think of me,' he said, reproachfully. 'You are the only brother I have. I want you to see Miss Vincent and to give me your candid opinion how I stand with her. I cannot go on much longer in this way; it is making me quite thin; the Traffords, too, are beginning to be suspicious, and Felicia is growing cold: could you not take her off my hands for one evening? I would do as much for you.' And, as I found it impossible to refuse this touching request, I consented to be victimized, and packed my gladstone.

"I did not see Catherine until we were just going in to dinner; she had entered the room while Miss Angela Trafford was showing me the conservatory: Angela was a pretty, artless little girl, and I rather enjoyed the business." But here there was an indignant remonstrance on Elsie's part.

"You are just saying that to tease me, but I know, I know," with a triumphant tone in her voice, "that you never flirted in your life; Mrs. Romney told me that. I don't care a bit if Angela were as pretty as she could be, I would trust you with a dozen Angelas."

"Should you darling? That is just what I wanted you to say. My bait had a nibble immediately. When we went back to the drawing-room I saw Romney speaking to a young lady in black; she was somewhat pale and unattractive-looking, and I never imagined for a moment it was Miss Vincent. Romney had praised her so enthusiastically that I failed to recognize his description; though she was cer-

tainly very graceful-looking. I was rather taken aback, then, when he said, somewhat eagerly, 'Miss Vincent, this is my brother, Captain Carfax,' in a voice that would have betrayed him to the most indifferent person. 'I want you two to be good friends.'

"I was bound to confess that this was somewhat cool on Romney's part, considering the small encouragement he had received; and I was not at all surprised that Miss Vincent bowed to me rather coldly. I saw then that she had fine eyes, with a great deal of expression in them, and that her hands and arms were unusually beautiful.

"She sat beside me at dinner, but Angela Trafford was on my right hand, and I found no opportunity of speaking to her for some time. When I did so I found her quite ready to converse with me; her brief coldness had vanished, and she was full of animation: before many minutes had passed I thought her charming; she was brimful of intelligence, and her manner was so unconscious and yet so sprightly that I began to understand Romney's infatuation.

"I did not mention his name for some time, and this was quite involuntary on my part, but a marked change came over her at once. She grew pale and seemed to stiffen. I pretended not to notice this, but continued talking about him, and she became more syllabic and still more icy, and seemed almost glad when Mrs. Trafford gave the signal for the ladies to rise.

"When we returned to the drawing-room Catherine was singing. That beautiful voice drew me to the piano at once. Romney followed me, but after an instant he drew back and took up his station beside Felicia's chair; his attitude was somewhat moody; he seemed lost in thought; he was pulling his moustache in a perplexed hopeless sort of way—you know what I mean.

"The corner where I stood was a dark one, and I believe Catherine was unconscious of my presence. When she had finished her song she turned over her music to find another; then I saw her suddenly pause and fix her eyes on Romney. I shall never forget her expression: if ever woman loved a man Catherine loved Romney, I was convinced of that; then I saw a distressed flush come to her face, her lip suddenly quivered, and she bent over her music again.

"I did not speak to her again that evening; neither did Romney; I think he purposely held aloof. When she finished singing, she played chess with Mr. Trafford until the men retired to the smoking-room.

"Romney came to my room late that night.

"Well," he said, abruptly, 'what do you think of her? It was evident she liked you. I never saw her so animated.'

"I thought her very interesting," was my response. 'She is not handsome, but somehow she impresses her individuality on you. Perhaps it is not too strong to say she has a charming personality.'

"My dear fellow," and here Romney positively beamed, 'I knew you would appreciate her, you are both so genuine. And now tell me if you think I have any chance with her?'

"Go in and win," was my encouraging reply; 'you shall have my congratulations beforehand;' and I sent him to bed radiant.

"The next morning I encountered Miss Vincent and her pupils in the garden: they were feeding their pets, and she was reading in the fernery. She welcomed me with a smile, and I at once entered into conversation with her. She looked tired and a little sad, and there was a plaintiveness in her voice, but she surprised me very much by asking after Romney:

"He did not seem in spirits last night. I don't think the place suits him. Why don't you advise him to have a thorough change?"

"She spoke impulsively, but she evidently meant what she said.

"I am afraid I should have no influence with him, Miss Vincent: the Firs has too great an attraction for him."

"I suppose my manner was a little pointed. She blushed violently, and seemed agitated for a moment; then she summoned up her courage for another effort:

"We have seen a great deal of Mr. Carfax lately. He has been very kind; I should think it is his nature to be kind. Mrs. Trafford is devoted to him: she is always asking him to stay. It is a pity if the place does not suit him."

"Why do you think it does not suit him? You may depend upon it, my brother would not come if it did not please him. Men are not so unselfish."

"Oh, he is not selfish; no one is less so. I know him very well; we are good friends; that is why I think he needs a change. This sandy soil does not suit everybody: you should tell him so; please do,' almost pleadingly; and I could see then what beautiful eyes she had: in spite of the strangeness of her words, there was something so gentle and earnest in her expression that I could not turn them off with a laugh. I felt that she was appealing to me for help, that she had come to some crisis in her life when she wanted a friend.

"I will tell him so, if you wish it, that you consider the place does not suit him, that you are sure he needs a change."

"Yes, tell him that: he is very good-natured; he will not be angry. Thank you very much, Captain Carfax." She sighed, and then abruptly changed the subject by speaking of the book she held in her hand: "It is a good book: it helps me very much; it is sad, but there are such beautiful thoughts in it: the writer was too introspective, and everything discouraged him, and in some sense his life was a failure, but, as the introduction so truly says, "all thinkers are at home with him.""

"I took the book from her hand: it was, as I guessed, the 'Journal Intime of Henry Frederick Amiel.' I had seen reviews of it. I read out the first words that caught my eye: 'We dream alone, we suffer alone, we die alone, we inhabit the last resting-place alone,' and then I paused.

"Oh, you have not finished the passage," she said, with quick animation. "Read what he says next: "There is nothing to prevent us from opening our solitude to God." Amiel speaks well there; but, after all, is one in any sense alone? even in our solitude we cannot strip ourselves of the thoughts, the memories, of others; we are still guided and governed by invisible monitors; even in our loneliness the

footsteps of our friends leave their mark everywhere.' And when she had said this she closed the book and called the children to her. I found an opportunity to give Miss Vincent's message while they were hurrying my horse round to the stable. When Romney heard it a brightness came into his eyes.

"'Did she say that?' I will speak to her to-night; she knows already that I love her, but to-night I will ask her to be my wife.'

"'All right,' was my response. After all, Romney was at liberty to choose his own wife: Miss Vincent was a gentlewoman, it was easy to see that, and what did her poverty matter? Romney had money enough for both. I had always been democratic in my views on social questions, and it did not in the least shock me that my future sister-in-law was a governess.

"There were some military manoeuvres the next day, and it was late in the afternoon when I returned to my hut, heated and jaded: when I opened the door I saw Romney extended in the hammock-chair, looking cool and comfortable. He jumped up and grasped my hand.

"'Wish me joy, lad!' he said, excitedly. 'Catherine is mine, after all: she has accepted me; but it was a hard tussle. You must drink our health in some hock and seltzer water. I have taken the liberty to give some orders in your absence.'

"'I congratulate you heartily,' was my reply, 'but I refuse to hear another word until I have had my tub and got into some fresh garments;' and, though Romney grumbled, only my fox-terrier Wasp was the recipient of his growls; but when I returned refreshed and in excellent temper he took his revenge. Oh, ye gods, how he did talk! but my pipe consoled me: dear as the charms of young love was that pipe to my soul! Well, Elsie,"—another reproachful look,—“have you not got reconciled to your all-powerful rival yet?"

"Oh, go on with your story," she returned, in a vexed voice. "I understand your jokes, and they do not in the least trouble me, but all the same you are incorrigible."

"I have not half educated her yet, you see," returned Oliver, apostrophizing the swans, "but there is plenty of time. Tobacco certainly supported me that afternoon under the torrent of Romney's eloquence; and I do not mind confessing to you that I was a bit interested.

"Catherine had refused him at first, but with such tears and agitation that he had declined to take her answer, and had at last compelled her to acknowledge that she was far from indifferent to him.

"'But I must not—I ought not to marry you,' she kept saying, and then at last it all came out: she loved him, but she was proud, and she could not endure that his people should consider her beneath him.

"'We are poor, dreadfully poor,' she went on; and then, with the openness and candor that seemed natural to her, she told him about her life.

"It was rather a pitiful story. Her father was of good family, but he had been unfortunate; nothing seemed to prosper with him: he had begun life as a barrister, but had never succeeded in holding a brief;

then he had taken pupils and married a pretty, penniless girl, very gentle and amiable, but she had died when Catherine was about twelve years old, leaving her with a baby sister.

"During the fourteen years of his married life Mr. Vincent had tried many things and failed in all. He had been journalist, reporter, a literary hack, and had hardly been able to keep his head above water: he had no want of brain, but he was deficient in ballast, and he lacked backbone. Even Catherine, who adored her father, owned that he was lamentably weak: 'unstable as water, thou shalt not excel,' might have been written of Stephen Vincent. And yet the man had influential friends: one of these educated Catherine, and at fourteen she was sent to a good finishing-school at Brighton. The lady who was her benefactress died a few years afterwards, but while she lived Catherine never wanted a friend.

"At this time Mr. Vincent was doing some desultory literary work, and he and the child Eva were lodging at a house at Hendon, kept by a widow, a Mrs. Stewart. During her brief visits Catherine took a great dislike to this woman. She had beauty of a certain coarse type, and an easy good-natured manner that imposed on people, but Catherine, who was older than her years, was not deceived by Mrs. Stewart's plausible speeches, and she saw signs that warned her that she had a hard, sensual nature.

"More than once she entreated her father to change his lodgings; but, in spite of his weakness, Mr. Vincent had an obstinate will: the place suited him, he said, and Eva thrived under Mrs. Stewart's care; she was very good to them both, and he had never been more comfortable; and Catherine was obliged to yield the point; but if she had guessed the extent of her father's danger she would never have left him.

"Alas! before two months were over Mr. Vincent had taken the fatal step of making Mrs. Stewart his wife, and when it was too late he found he had united himself for life to a coarse-minded and evil woman.

"With what arts she had beguiled him must be left to the imagination; but, her object obtained, she almost at once threw off her disguise. When Catherine paid her next visit she was almost heart-broken at the sight of her father's wretchedness: his wife had become a terror to him; she ruled him with a rod of iron, and Eva was neglected and even ill-treated.

"She frightens me with her violence, Catherine,' he said: 'she is cruel to me and the child. She drinks, I know she drinks, and then she loses all control. You must stay and take care of us both.' But, alas, that was just what Catherine could not do; her step-mother hated her, she knew that, and during those brief visits she had to put up with many an insult. The poor girl, with all her courage, was no match for her.

"Why did you marry him if you meant to make him so wretched?' she exclaimed once, unable to bear the sight of her father's misery.

"I had my own reasons, you may be sure of that,' returned the woman, defiantly, 'or do you think I would have saddled myself

with a poor creature like Vincent, and a brat of a child as well, who never had chicks of my own? Oh, I had my reasons, though I am not going to tell you them, miss. Perhaps I wished to marry a gentleman; perhaps I was tired of my own name and wanted to get rid of it. Anyhow, I have made a poor bargain of it. Why, your father hardly earns his own victuals: I am keeping him and the child. "Write, why don't you write?" I say to him, when I bring him his pens and paper; "it is brains you are wanting, I expect," though he has the audacity to say that I prevent him from putting pen to paper!"

"Poor Catherine! she told Romney that every farthing she could spare was spent in procuring little comforts for her father and Eva; and what she suffered on their account was known only to herself. When her education was finished she had obtained a good situation as a governess; and since then she had clothed Eva as well as herself. It was the thought of this miserable home, with the consciousness that her father and Eva depended upon her for all their comforts, that made her think that she had no right to marry; but Romney soon convinced her that this was sheer pride and morbidness, and he had at last gained her promise to become his wife."

CHAPTER XV.

WOMAN'S WEAKNESS.

By and by is easily said.

At this point Oliver took out his watch.

"I must hurry up, child, if I am to finish before dinner-time. You know all about Romney's brief courtship, and the Traffords' coolness, and how my mother never saw Catherine until she was Romney's wife.

"A little while before their marriage they went down to Hendon. He gave me an account of his visit afterwards.

"Mr. Vincent is a gentleman," he said to me, "but he is utterly broken down and at his wife's mercy: she is a loud-voiced, brazen-faced woman, and her tongue must be a terrible scourge: there is no doubt that she drinks, but she was sober enough on this occasion, and perfectly civil to Catherine and myself; but it made my blood boil to hear her sneering innuendoes over her husband's helplessness and shiftless ways: he hardly dared open his mouth, for fear of some retort, and the poor child Eva looked utterly cowed.

"I did my best for them. I promised Mr. Vincent that he should receive an allowance from the date of our marriage, on the understanding that Eva should be sent to a good school; for really it was terrible to think of the poor child being left to the tender mercies of her step-mother, and certainly her father was no protector. But, to my surprise, Mr. Vincent objected to this arrangement; he could not part with the child, he said; they had never been separated; the very idea seemed to agitate him. But Mrs. Vincent interrupted him.

"I have no patience to hear you, Vincent!" she said, rudely.

"I wonder you aren't ashamed to expose your weakness before strangers. Not part with Missy? And who do you suppose is going to educate her?—He does not mean it, Mr. Carfax: he will come to his senses and thank you kindly for providing for the child, or I'll know the reason why," she muttered.

"“Father, it will be for Eva's good,” pleaded Catherine; and then at last he consented. “She is my only comfort,” he groaned, when his wife had left the room for a moment. “I shall never be able to live without her! it is cruel to take her from me!” but for the child's sake we were obliged to be firm. He was only reaping the result of his own fatal weakness: why should the innocent be sacrificed? He is selfish as well as weak,” went on Romney. “I dare not tell Catherine so, for, with all his faults, she believes in him; but he is a man I could never respect.”

“For the first year after their marriage, things went on fairly well: the quarterly allowance was paid and acknowledged, and when they went to town Catherine always saw her father: they had moved to Notting Hill then.

“Catherine always returned in low spirits from these visits: in her opinion things were becoming worse. Eva had not yet been sent to school, and only carried on a few desultory studies with her father's help, and even these had been discontinued of late. Catherine noticed a lamentable change in her father: a strange listlessness and lethargy seemed creeping over him, as though some numbing influence were clouding his faculties: at times he was excited and irritable, and his fear of his wife seemed to have increased to a nervous dread.

“‘I dare not thwart her,’ he said: ‘if I do, she visits it on Eva: she makes me suffer through the child. The spirits madden her, and then I am in terror of my life. I am always afraid of something dreadful happening. I dare not trust Eva out of my sight; it is she who will not let her go to school: she says we want the money; but she keeps it all.’ Catherine used to carry home sorrowful tales to Romney, but he once told me in confidence that he distrusted Mr. Vincent. ‘He has not a straightforward look about him: you know what I mean. I dare say circumstances are too hard for him, poor beggar: one ought not to judge him harshly; that woman is his master. Don't you wish, Oliver, that we could lock up such creatures? they are the plague and pestilence of our civilized life; and, upon my word, it is a form of madness.’

“One day I went down to Frythe unexpectedly, and found Catherine in terrible trouble. Romney's banker had sent for him: a cheque for a large amount, payable to Stephen Vincent, had been detained; the cheque was genuine and in Romney's handwriting, but the figures had been evidently altered, but so clumsily that suspicion had been excited. ‘We did not like the look of the affair,’ observed the cashier: ‘the young lady who brought it could give no information, so we thought it best to send for you, Mr. Carfax, as the ordinary quarterly amount was more than quadrupled.’

“Romney thanked them, and explained that some one had certainly been tampering with the cheque, but that he had no wish to convict the

offender; he would settle the matter in his own way; and, without returning home, he went at once to Notting Hill.

"It was an abominable business," he said to me afterwards: "it sickens me to think of it. That woman was in the room, and refused to leave me alone with her husband. When I threw the cheque on the table I saw Mr. Vincent turn ashy pale and throw up his hands. 'If one of us has to be sent to prison it ought to be my wife,' he cried. 'It was she who tempted me to do it, who stood looking over my shoulder all the time. I have been an honest man all my life, in spite of my misfortunes; and she has been my curse!' And the poor wretch burst into tears."

"Catherine was almost beside herself when she told me what had happened. 'My poor, poor father,' she sobbed, 'who was the soul of honor, and never owed a penny even in his worst straits! I do not believe that he did it; or, if he did, he was not himself. I have told Romney more than once that I am sure that his intellect is becoming clouded with misery; but he does not believe me: he thinks that he has done this thing. And now he has forbidden me to go near him; he says it is not safe for us to have dealings with them. The allowance is to be paid in a different way; for my sake he will not discontinue it; but he says it is only on the understanding that I will never have anything more to do with them during that woman's lifetime.'

"And Eva?"

"He has promised that all possible efforts shall be made to withdraw Eva from her step-mother. Oh, he was very kind; he said my visits did more harm than good,—that Mrs. Vincent merely traded upon us, and that, even if I differed from him in opinion, I owed him a wife's obedience, and that he had every right on his side; and of course I took Romney's part.

"Romney was perfectly open with me.

"It is spoiling Catherine's life," he said: "they give her no peace, between them. To satisfy her, I make the old man a sufficient allowance. I can and will do no more. She can write to them, but I will not allow her to enter that woman's house."

"I heard nothing more for eighteen months or so. Harry was born, and Catherine remained in a delicate state for some time. She wrote to her father from time to time, but he seldom answered; but Eva wrote pathetic little letters, which were always shown to Romney.

"Three months ago, I had come down here for a flying visit. Romney had been suddenly called up to London to attend a friend's funeral, and meant to sleep two or three nights in town. I thought Catherine in wonderfully good spirits, considering his absence; and we had a very pleasant evening. I remember I had just been to a certain ball, and what must Catherine do but pounce upon my secret? 'You have fallen in love, you naughty boy,' she said, immediately she saw me: 'you are not a bit yourself. Now tell me all about her.' And—would you believe it, Elsie?—I was fool enough to fall into the trap. I do not know which of us enjoyed ourselves most; for Catherine is like you,—she dearly loves a love-story. But my pleasure was not of long continuance. The very next day a note was brought to Catherine that

seemed to agitate her; she said nothing at the time, but a little while afterwards she told me that she had business that would oblige her to go to Draycott.

"I offered to drive her there, but she hesitated visibly; when I persisted, she begged me to set her down at that big draper's,—Willcox's, isn't it?—telling me that she would meet me in the market-place at twelve o'clock; but I waited for her a full hour before she joined me. She had her veil down, but I noticed at once that her eyes were red and swollen as though she had been crying; but it was impossible to question her, as Reynolds would have overheard every word: so I talked to her on indifferent subjects, and she answered me at random.

"She did not appear at luncheon, and my mother told me that she had a bad headache and was lying down; but she had recovered herself by dinner-time, and, though she looked wretchedly ill, she made an effort to talk as usual.

"I intended to find out the reason of this sudden fit of depression; but I bided my time until my mother had left us, and then I questioned her very closely. Her answers were decidedly evasive, and more than once she contradicted herself; but I persevered, and her agitation increased, and at last she burst into tears and told me everything. Her father and Eva were in Draycott. Mr. Vincent, driven to desperation by the misery of his home, had formed the singular resolution of escaping from his wife and putting himself and Eva under Catherine's protection; he had taken a few sovereigns out of his wife's purse while she lay in one of her heavy stupors, and Eva had willingly accompanied him. Her step-mother's evil tempers made the poor girl's life a perfect torment to her, and in her innocence and inexperience she thought that Catherine would approve of this step.

"A pencilled note sent by hand informed Catherine that they were at the Temperance Hotel in Cannon Street, and on her arrival she found, to her dismay, that these two helpless creatures were looking to her as their sole refuge. The pitiful story that Eva told her nearly broke her heart, and the girl's thin wan looks alarmed her,—she had evidently outgrown her strength; and her education was almost wholly neglected. Latterly they had kept no servant; and Eva's rough and coarsened hands told their own tale.

"But Catherine's chief fear was for her father: he was evidently out of health, and the signs of clouded intellect were clearly apparent: he seemed to have a fixed idea that his wife meant to compass his and Eva's death, and he declared no power on earth would induce him to return to her; and Eva assured her sister that all persuasions and arguments would be fruitless.

"Catherine was at her wits' end; and then she remembered a tidy hard-working woman whose child she had once befriended and who let lodgings in Church Street. Mrs. Tilsit was a kind-hearted person and thoroughly honest: she would represent the case to her, only keeping back the fact that Mr. Vincent was her father; and she thought if she changed the name to Smith it would be safer on all accounts.

"She started at once for Church Street, and, to her relief, found that the rooms were unoccupied. Mrs. Tilsit expressed herself perfectly

willing to care for the poor gentleman, and the moderate sum she named was quite within Catherine's means.

"Mr. Vincent—or rather Mr. Smith, as he consented to call himself—seemed quite satisfied with the look of the rooms: they were small, and the furniture humble, but they were exquisitely clean; and Eva took a great fancy to the buxom, cheerful-looking landlady.

"I will make the old gentleman as comfortable as comfortable. Don't say another word, Mrs. Carfax: it is enough for me that they are friends of yours. Don't I remember all your kindness to Johnnie when he had his leg cut off in the hospital! ah, well, the dear lamb is better off, isn't he? though I do crave sadly after him still.' And the good woman wiped her eyes gently with her apron.

"Catherine had left them looking fairly cheerful, but you may imagine the feelings with which I listened to her. I had promised to keep her confidence, little thinking what she had to tell me.

"My first words were to entreat her to write to Romney, or to tell him immediately on his return. I understood her to say that she intended to do so, and this at once relieved me.

"I left the next day, and you know what happened then, darling: was it any wonder that my own affairs so entirely absorbed me that I scarcely remembered Mr. Vincent's existence? now and then a feeling of surprise crossed me that Catherine did not write; when her letter came it was full of sisterly congratulation on my engagement, but she never mentioned her father.

"You remember I went down from Friday to Monday, as my mother wished to see me. I found Catherine apparently cheerful, but it struck me once or twice that she avoided being alone with me. This excited my suspicion, and I determined to watch my opportunity.

"As we were walking home from church together,—Romney was in front, with Mrs. Vickars,—Catherine was telling me an anecdote about Harry, but I interrupted her:

"I will hear that presently. I want to know why you have not written to me, Catherine. Was Romney vexed when he heard your father was in Draycott?" But at this question she turned pale and hung her head.

"He does not know yet,' she faltered. 'Oh, Oliver, don't look at me in that way, as though you blamed me! I have tried a dozen times to tell him, and I cannot, I dare not! Oh, I am a pitiful coward, but I dare not make him angry.'

"Why do you suppose he would be angry?" I replied. 'You are very wrong, Catherine. I never thought you could be so weak. Do you mean to tell me that for six weeks you have kept this secret from your husband?"

"Yes, and it is killing me. I suffer—oh, what I suffer! but I dare not tell him: when I try my lips seem glued together. What would he say if he knew I had disobeyed and deceived him?"

"Of course he would be angry; but at least you can be sure of his forgiveness;" but Catherine shook her head.

"He would never trust me again; and yet what am I to do, Oliver?" wringing her hands. 'My father is dying: it is only a ques-

tion of weeks; Dr. Evans says so: his brain is affected, and at times he suffers terribly.'

"Do you think that Romney would be hard on a dying man? What has become of your good sense, Catherine? If you had trusted your husband six weeks ago you would have had no reason to dread his anger. Why did you not write to him, as I bade you? why did you not say to him, 'I have disobeyed you; my father is at Draycott, and I am taking care of him'? Do you suppose Romney would have been hard on you?"

"Oh, I was wrong, very wrong," she sobbed, 'but you do not understand. Where Romney is concerned I am a coward. I see my mistake as plainly as you do; but you must not think it was intentional: every day I meant to tell Romney. I have tried to do so over and over again, but my courage failed: "I will tell him to-morrow; I shall be stronger to-morrow,"—that is what I would say to myself.'

"But, Catherine, this is sheer madness. Romney will find it out for himself the next time the allowance is paid.'

"It has been paid," she returned, quickly. 'Mrs. Vincent signed the receipt: she said her husband was ill in bed. She did not wish Romney to know that he had left her.'

"Did Romney tell you this?"

"Yes. Oh, don't look at me so sternly, Oliver! I really was beginning to tell him then, only Lady Carfax came into the room, and Romney changed the subject.'

"There is one other thing, Catherine. Are you not afraid that Romney will come face to face with Eva?"

"He has done so, but he has not recognized her. Eva was a child when he saw her last. There is no danger of that sort: my father is confined to his room.'

"Shall I tell Romney for you?" but she negatived this with great agitation.

"No: I will tell him myself. I will,—indeed I will. I will humble myself to him and ask his pardon, and then—oh, yes, he will be good to me.'

"Come, that is spoken like yourself, Catherine.'

"And then Romney turned back to meet us, and we could say no more. When I went away the next morning she told me of her own accord that she meant to speak to Romney that night, but she would not promise to write to me; she said such a letter would be very painful, and that when I brought you down to the Frythe she would tell me all about it.

"You can understand, Elsie, my disgust and disappointment, on that first evening when I left you so long alone, when Catherine informed me that Romney was still in ignorance, and that as her father could not last many days she should not tell him until all was over. I was very angry, and accused her of purposely breaking her promise to me, but she assured me with tears that she fully meant to keep her word, but that her courage always failed.

"You cannot feel the contempt I feel for myself," she exclaimed, bitterly. 'I loathe myself for my cowardice. Oh, you were right,

Oliver: if I had told Romney at once he would have helped me; but now I cannot, I dare not; he would put my father in a lunatic asylum: he is not sane, I know, but he is so weak, and he cannot live.'

"I tried to reason her out of this idea; but this morbid fancy had taken possession of her, and she said Eva had the same terror. Romney was always praising up the Draycott asylum and saying what a skilful and clever doctor managed it and how admirably everything was arranged.

"Dr. Evans proposed it too,' she went on: 'he said he would have every comfort there, and the best of nursing; but, Oliver, I want him to die in peace. If Mrs. Tilsit cannot manage, I will get a nurse. He shall have everything that I can give him.'

"I asked her if he was violent, and she said very seldom, and that he was growing weaker. When I questioned her about money arrangements she hesitated, and then confessed that she had recently parted with a handsome bracelet that Sir Henry had given her, and she thankfully accepted my offer to help her.

"You can guess the rest for yourself, Elsie. You know now why I spent the night out. Mrs. Tilsit was worn out, and needed help. Catherine still obstinately refuses to tell Romney until her father's death, and then she means to plead with him for Eva; she wants her to live at the Frythe. I do not wish you to be too hard on Catherine, though I own I have lost patience with her. Listen, dear: is not that the gong? I must put you ashore at once. And, for pity's sake, don't look so miserable, or my mother will think we have quarrelled." But, though Elsie laughed hysterically at this idea, her eyes were wet. "Poor Mrs. Romney!" she sighed as she crossed the lawn; "but how can any one act so foolishly?"

CHAPTER XVI.

ELSIE'S DILEMMA.

I give him joy that's awkward at a lie.
YOUNG.

OLIVER's narrative made a painful impression on Elsie which she found it impossible to shake off.

She was perplexed by this sudden revelation of weakness: that a woman so naturally frank and upright as Catherine Carfax should indulge in morbid fears and moral cowardice would have puzzled a wiser and older head; and yet who could blame her? was it not the strength and piety of her filial love that made the idolizing wife stoop to deceive her husband? Granted that her fears were groundless and that she had no real cause to dread Romney's treatment of her father, yet was there no nobility, however mistaken, in that secret watching beside a dying bed, in those stolen interviews when she was as a ministering angel to him and Eva?

"Let him die in peace," was her inward cry. "What will anything matter afterwards? Let me close his eyes,—and then—then Romney shall learn everything."

When Elsie entered the drawing-room, she was surprised to see Mrs. Romney lying on the couch by the open window, talking to her mother-in-law: she greeted Elsie with a faint smile and held out a hot hand to her. "I am in the hands of the Philistines," she said, with an attempt at playfulness. "Dr. Fergusson and Romney are as disagreeable as possible, and are determined to treat me as an invalid; but I mean to fight for my freedom."

"You are the worst patient I ever knew," returned Romney, who seemed to have recovered his spirits. "Is she not a bit of quicksilver, mother?" And Lady Carfax gave an assenting smile.

"Are you not coming to dinner?" asked Elsie, as the Squire offered his arm to his mother, and Catherine did not rise.

"No: my lord and master has decided that I am to remain here," replied Mrs. Romney, but there was a vexed chord in her voice. "Go in with Oliver, my dear. All men are tyrants: you will find that out for yourself some day." But Romney only shook his head indulgently at this rebellious speech. "She is as weak and shaky as possible," he observed, *sotto voce*: "she is only fit to lie there. Elsie, I think I shall make you head nurse to-morrow. You will have to carry out my orders most stringently."

"Is to-morrow your day at Winton?" asked Oliver.

"Yes; I have to see Hudson about the short-horns; I think I shall take the ten-fifty train: that will give me plenty of time."

"And you will come back by the five-thirty as usual?"

"Yes; I could not possibly catch the two-forty-five, and there is no other train.—So mind, Elsie, I leave you in charge. Catherine is to go no farther than the garden; if she wants a walk I will take her myself when I return: she exposes herself too much to the sun; a stroll between six and seven will do her far more good. And don't let Harry tire her. She is to have entire rest for a few days: those are Fergusson's orders."

"I will do my best," returned Elsie, rather nervously, but her heart sank a little at the task imposed upon her. Supposing Mrs. Romney chose to be contumacious? but at least Oliver would help her; but, to her dismay, she heard him say the next minute that he meant to accompany his brother, a proposition that seemed to please the Squire.

"You are sure you will take that train back?" he asked, a little anxiously.

"Quite sure, my dear fellow. Have you any idea of the heaps of business I have to transact? Why, I have not been over to Winton for the last three months." And so the matter was settled.

When dinner was over, Elsie found herself alone with Mrs. Romney for ten minutes.

"Have you had your orders, Elsie?" asked Catherine, in a queer voice, as the girl came up to her; and Elsie nodded assent.

"Ah! I thought so," leaning back a little wearily on her cushions. "I have had mine too. Let me see,"—checking the items off on her fingers,—“breakfast in bed, a thing I hate,—but we will let that pass—poor Romney! he means well,—Harry for half an hour, but no longer, a stroll in the garden, a nap after luncheon,—can naps be fur-

nished to order, Elsie?—and very weak tea, a decoction I loathe. There, I have forgotten the rest.”

“I hope you mean to be good, or you will get me into trouble.” But Mrs. Romney made no answer to this, and directly her husband came into the room she pleaded fatigue and retired.

“I wish you were not going to Winton,” observed Elsie, rather wistfully, as she and Oliver wandered about in the summer twilight. “You are always leaving me now.”

“I proposed it, dear, because Romney thinks I neglect him: he does so dearly love a companion. If Catherine had been stronger she would have gone with him, but she certainly does not look fit for much. I don’t think you will have much trouble with her, Elsie, for she will not dare to take out the horses, as it would reach Romney’s ears.”

“Then she will not want to go to Draycott?” returned Elsie, brightening up visibly at this.

“I dare say that in her heart she will be longing to go, but she knows Reynolds would tell his master that the horses had been out, as mother wants them in the afternoon. No, no; set your mind at rest; there will be no drive to Draycott.” And Elsie was much relieved to hear this.

“Be a good girl, Elsie, and take care of Catherine,” were Romney’s parting words, as he and Oliver drove off from the door: from an upper window the hand that Romney thought the fairest in the world waved him a farewell.

Elsie stood on the steps watching them. Her eyes rested a little wistfully on the brothers; their expression was soft and dreamy: the young fair-haired officer, with his grave face and quiet ways, had taken possession of her and her life. Did Elsie any longer regret her lost freedom? did her bonds continue to gall her? The sweet, smiling brightness of her face contradicted such a notion. “Loyal and true, true and loyal,” was the Vaughan motto.

A peal of baby laughter roused her from her abstraction, and soon she and Harry were pelting each other with daisies on the lawn. Now and then Catherine stood by her window to watch them: the limp crushed flowers in the little fat hand, the joy with which each frail blossom was hurled at his play-fellow, the exulting shout when one reached her, formed a lovely sight to the mother’s heart.

Elsie had forgotten all about her charge. Harry was clamoring to see the water-fowl, and she carried him herself to the lake, while his nurse went back to the house to fetch some needlework. Directly she returned Elsie put down the stuttering, remonstrating boy and bade him pick some more daisies, and then she went in search of Mrs. Romney.

“She must be dressed by this time,” thought she, “and I shall coax her down to the shady seat by the water;” but as she knocked briskly at the door of Catherine’s room, no answering voice bade her enter. The room was in disorder, and Eliza, the deaf housemaid, was making the bed. Elsie ran down-stairs again, but the drawing-room and the library were empty, and the white Persian cat was the sole tenant of

the morning room. In the hall she encountered Emma, the under-housemaid. "Is Mrs. Romney in the east wing?" she asked.

"No, ma'am; she has gone out," returned the girl, "and she asked me to give you this note, as she would not be back to luncheon."

Elsie suppressed an exclamation with difficulty.

"Gone out? Are you sure, Emma?" she asked, as she took the note.

"Oh, yes, ma'am; she left the house ten minutes ago, when you and Master Baby were down by the lake. She went down the shrubbery path, and let herself out by the green gate."

Elsie made no answer, and as soon as Emma was out of sight she tore open the note; it only contained a few sentences: "Forgive me, Elsie dear, for giving you the slip, but it was the best thing to do. I am going to Draycott by train; there is only a mile to walk, and I shall take the four-fifteen train back; that will bring me home long before Romney returns from Winton. Put Gran off the scent; but it is just possible that she will have luncheon with Sir Henry. Adieu. Do not be vexed with me, little one."

Elsie could have sat down and cried hot tears of indignation and alarm. Was Mrs. Romney mad, to walk to the station in this broiling heat,—for it was a sultry, airless morning,—and in her weak state, too? She meant to be absent for hours; she would time herself to arrive just before her husband's train was due. "Oh, it is madness, sheer madness!" raged Elsie. "What am I to do if Lady Carfax questions me? I have never told a lie in my life, and I never will. She has gone to Draycott by train,—can I say anything else? and it will all come out before the Squire. Oh, if only Oliver had not gone! I had a misgiving last night, but he only laughed at me: he said she would never dare to go to Draycott."

Elsie was working herself up to fresh indignation, when Lady Carfax's voice sounded from the east wing. The window of her sitting-room opened on the terrace where Elsie was standing.

"Elsie, my dear." And Elsie slipped the note into her pocket, and hurried to the window.

"I am sorry to trouble you, my love," explained Lady Carfax, with her old-fashioned courtesy, "but will you kindly give Catherine a message? The Turners have just sent me a note to ask me to go up to the Rowans' to luncheon, and they will drive me in to Draycott: so I have told Reynolds that I shall not want the horses after all. Will you kindly tell Catherine this, as I am somewhat pressed for time?"

"Are you going there at once?" asked Elsie, with nervous anxiety; but Lady Carfax was too short-sighted to notice the girl's expression.

"As soon as I have finished reading the paper to Sir Henry. Will you come in and see him, my dear?" But Elsie made a lame excuse and hurried away: she would go down to the lake and hide herself until Lady Carfax was safely off the premises, and then there would be no awkward questions. "It is not right of Mrs. Romney to put me in such a painful position," she thought, with another wave of indignation: "she sacrifices every one, Oliver, and me, and her own husband, to this horrid mystery. I feel I can bear no more. I shall

ask Oliver to let me go back to Banksland." And with this resolution Elsie opened her book. Presently Emma came in search of her to tell her that luncheon was ready.

"No one seemed to know where to find you, ma'am," she explained, "but I saw you from an upper window. I think Roberts has gone to the east wing."

"And Lady Carfax has gone out?"

"Oh, yes, an hour ago: she left her love, and hoped Mrs. Romney felt brighter, and that she would eat a good luncheon."

"But you told her that Mrs. Romney was out?"

"Oh, yes, ma'am, but she was in too great a hurry to hear me, for she only said, 'Give my love to her, and tell her I shall be home by six.'"

"What a piece of good luck, the Turners sending that invitation!" thought Elsie, as she sat down to her solitary meal. Roberts was very attentive to her, though he was evidently perplexed by the absence of his young mistress, and Elsie, feeling somewhat relieved, made an excellent meal.

Her spirits were beginning to rise: after all, things were not so bad as she imagined; it was nearly half-past two, and in another two hours Mrs. Romney would be at Fordham: she would reach home nearly an hour before the Squire could put in an appearance. Elsie began to feel as though enjoyment were possible. She smoothed her hair, and, fetching her embroidery, seated herself in the veranda. She had made up her mind to be at Fordham Station in time to meet the train, so that Mrs. Romney should not have a long, lonely walk.

Elsie's thoughts began to stray happily to the future, and to the Indian bungalow that awaited her: she was trying to recall what a friend of hers had told her about Indian life and its pleasures, when she heard the green door in the shrubbery shut, and a moment afterwards quick footsteps crunching the gravel.

"She has come back earlier than she expected," thought the girl, joyfully, as she sprang up from her chair. "It cannot be half-past three yet." But Elsie's bright look of expectation changed to absolute dismay as the Squire's tall figure emerged from the shrubbery.

Elsie would have turned and fled, but he had seen her, and waved his hand gayly. He had walked fast, and looked hot and tired, and he flung himself down in a hammock-seat in the cool veranda with a sigh of relief. "Upon my word, it is the hottest day we have had this year, and there has not been a yard of shade the whole way. How delightfully cool and comfortable you look!"

"Where is Oliver?" faltered Elsie, who felt anything but cool that moment.

"Oh, Spiers got hold of him and carried him off to luncheon at the Hall. He will come by the next train. I got through all my business quicker than I expected: so I thought I might as well come home. Is Catherine lying down?"

"No," rather faintly. "Oh, how tired you look! Shall Roberts bring you anything? Would you like tea earlier?"

"If he would bring me some hock and seltzer I should be deeply

grateful; no, nonsense! where are you going, Elsie? Do you think I am too far gone to ring the dining-room bell and give my orders?" But Elsie turned a deaf ear to this: she would ring for Roberts, and make her escape.

She looked at the clock as she passed it: twenty minutes to four: nearly another hour before Mrs. Romney's train was due at Fordham!

"I will not go near him," she said to herself, as she locked herself into her room. "He will think me unkind and neglectful, but it is the only course to pursue." But a few minutes later there was a knock at her door.

It was Emma, with a disturbed look on her rosy face.

"If you please, ma'am, will you go down to master, Roberts says. He wants to speak to you a moment."

"Very well, Emma," was the reply; but poor Elsie was some minutes before she could summon up her courage to face the Squire.

He was still in the veranda, and had evidently had his refreshment, but he looked decidedly put out.

"What a time you have been!" he said, a little irritably. "Why did you go away, Elsie? I wanted to talk to you. What is this Roberts tells me, that Catherine is out? Surely she and you could not have misunderstood my orders. Out in this sun! Roberts says that, to the best of his belief, she has been out most of the day." And there was an ominous frown on the Squire's face.

"It is not my fault," began Elsie, rather lamely, but he interrupted her:

"When did she leave the house?"

"I do not know,—not the exact time, I mean. I was playing with Harry down by the lake, and when I looked for her, Emma told me that she had gone out."

"And have you no idea of the time?"

"It was before eleven. I was going back to the house to tell her how cool and shady it was by the water, and I was very troubled when I could not find her."

"Did she leave no message? Good heavens, Elsie! she must surely have told some one where she was going."

"She left a note to say that she was going to Draycott by train, and would be back by the four-thirty train."

An alarmed look came into the Squire's face. "Do you mean to tell me that she walked to Fordham Station?"

"Oh, yes, she walked," returned Elsie, wishing with all her heart that she were anywhere else. "She thought Lady Carfax wanted the horses, but the Turners are driving her in to Draycott. I know she means to walk back."

"We shall see about that," returned Mr. Carfax, abruptly, and he rang the drawing-room bell with a peal that brought Roberts without delay.

CHAPTER XVII.

ROMNEY.

I will instruct my sorrow to be proud.

King John.

"TELL Reynolds to put the mare into the victoria and to meet the four-thirty train at Fordham."

"It is ten minutes past four now, sir," replied Roberts, respectfully; "by the stable clock it is near the quarter."

"Tell him to drive fast and overtake me," was the curt answer: "he is to look sharp about it, mind." And the Squire took up his straw hat.

"Let me go with you," pleaded Elsie, terrified at the sternness of his manner: in spite of his easy good nature, the Squire was never disobeyed with impunity.

"I must go with you," she continued, as he shook his head: "I see you are angry with us both, and I must explain things. Poor Mrs. Romney! oh, I know she cannot help herself."

"Get your hat, then," was his curt reply. Romney was not quite pleased with Elsie: he fancied that her answer had been evasive, and if there was one thing that the Squire detested with all his honest heart, it was want of straightforwardness: if she were free from blame, why had she left him, and why did she seem so nervous when he questioned her about Catherine's movements? There was something beneath all this, and he meant to get to the bottom of it.

And Catherine, his own Kitty, had disobeyed him! Too well he remembered all those tender injunctions of his, how he had begged her as a favor to him not to exert herself in any way, and she had smiled in his face as she answered him. "You foolish, tiresome old man," she had called him.

Not exert herself; and she had walked in this sun, not an inch of shade anywhere, and had spent the whole day at Draycott! "It is enough to try a saint's patience," he thought, angrily. No wonder Elsie looked at him with wide, frightened eyes as they walked down the shrubbery path together; but he kept silence until they were in the road.

"Well," he observed, abruptly, as he tried to adapt his long strides to his companion's tripping steps,— "well, Elsie, what is this that you have to tell me?"

"I want to tell you why Mrs. Romney is so ill," she replied, in a breathless voice. "I have only just found it out for myself. It is because she is keeping something from you, and it makes her dreadfully unhappy. You and Dr. Fergusson think she is ill; but no, it is only fretting because she feels she is deceiving you."

"Do you know what you are saying?" returned Romney; and then he actually laughed. "Catherine deceive me! Why, the idea is utterly absurd!"

"She could not help herself. That is why I am telling you, because it is no use her trying to hide it any longer. She has bound Oliver to secrecy, but she has not bound me, and I have never told a

lie in my life, and I never will; and I want to help her, because she is so good and I love her."

"Bound Oliver to secrecy?" Romney began to feel a little giddy. What did the girl mean? why did she not speak out? Of course his Kitty was good, every one knew that, but all the same she had disobeyed him to-day.

"When you know all about it, you will not blame her in the least," went on Elsie, in the same breathless way. "You will be far too sorry for her. No one can help loving one's own father, especially when he is old and dying and broken-hearted." But here Romney laid a strong hand on the girl's slight shoulder.

"She has gone to see her father? What do you mean by this prevarication, Elsie? Just now when we were in the house you told me that Catherine had gone to Draycott."

"It is no prevarication," returned Elsie, indignantly. "You will make me angry with you if you say that. Mr. Vincent is at Draycott; he is hiding there from his wicked wife; and Eva is with him; and he is dying, and his poor brain is confused, and that is why Mrs. Romney has gone to him."

The Squire's hand dropped from her shoulder.

"Tell me all you know about this business," he said, sternly. "I was wrong in accusing you of prevarication. You are a good little soul, Elsie; but I think I am stupid with all this heat, for I do not seem to follow you. Mr. Vincent is at Draycott, you say, and the child Eva, and Catherine is with them, and Oliver, not her husband, is in her confidence?"

"Oh, I will explain that." And to the best of her ability Elsie did explain it, but it may be doubted how much the Squire understood.

The shock that staggered him was that Catherine had deceived him, that she had not ventured to trust her husband; for weeks, for months, she had kept this secret from him, from him who had never concealed a thought from her; she had deceived him for his own good, of course, but still she had deceived him.

"And Oliver was in her confidence?" He repeated this aloud, to Elsie's dismay.

"It was not Oliver's fault. Mr. Carfax, you do not understand: it has made Oliver so wretched; he hated the whole thing; he kept begging her to tell you everything, but she was afraid."

"Oh, she was afraid?" And the Squire laughed again, only it was not a pleasant laugh to hear. He began to think that he was dreaming, that Elsie must be talking to some one else. Kitty afraid of him! what a droll idea! untrue, too, on the face of it.

"There is Mrs. Romney coming towards us," exclaimed Elsie, suddenly. "Oh, how wan and ill she looks! Dear Mr. Carfax, do be good to her." But Romney turned impatiently from her: would the girl never cease her chattering? And yet Elsie had done her poor little best, and bravely too: with her ready girlish fingers she had cut the Gordian knot. "What was the use of deceiving him any more?" she said to Oliver afterwards. "It was the safest plan to tell him everything: only I made such a muddle of it."

The Squire stopped short when he saw his wife, but Catherine did not at first perceive them: she was walking in rather an unsteady way, her dress trailing in the dust behind her, and a dazed, far-off look in her eyes. She would have passed them in that strange abstraction, but Romney's voice arrested her: "Catherine." Never had he said that beloved name in such a tone.

She started violently, and the blood ebbed away from her face, with the sudden surprise.

"I did not see you. Have you come to meet me, you and Elsie?" Then, as she saw his face more clearly, "Oh, Romney, do not be angry with me! I know I have disobeyed you, but indeed, indeed——"

"I have told him everything," whispered Elsie. "It was the only thing to do."

"Yes, I know everything," replied her husband, with forced calm. "There is the victoria coming: we may as well go back and meet it." And he was turning away; but Catherine caught him by the arm.

"No, not everything, Romney," in a voice that was agonized and yet triumphant. "He is at rest; my poor father is at rest; he will never know sorrow and pain again. Listen to me, dear: by and by I will ask you to forgive me for my cowardice and deceit, but this moment I can only think of him. He died in my arms an hour ago; died?—nay, he slept away like a little child, and I kissed his dear eyes, and thanked God. Romney!" in a voice of despair,—“oh, he is not listening to me, and I am tired, so tired!” And, to Elsie's alarm, she swayed forward, and Romney caught her in his arms.

Poor Catherine! that dark irresponsible look on Romney's face was the last drop in her cup of sorrow. Worn out by heat, fatigue, her own weakness, and the tension of the last few hours, nothing could be more natural than that long fainting-fit, which alarmed Elsie nearly out of her senses and drove Romney to desperation.

He lifted her into the carriage, and supported her himself, and the moment they reached the house Reynolds was sent off to fetch Dr. Fergusson. Consciousness soon returned, however, and in a little while she was able to thank Elsie for her kindly attentions.

"Where is Romney?" she whispered, faintly, as Elsie kissed her and hoped she was better.

"He has shut himself up in the library, and Dr. Fergusson is to go to him there, and he has asked for Oliver. He only left the room just now: he waited until he heard you speak." But this evidently failed to give Catherine any comfort, for she closed her eyes with a deep sigh.

"He cannot trust himself to speak to me," she thought, and the slow tears of utter weakness rolled down her face. "He is angry with me, or he would not have left me."

Elsie read her thoughts. "He has only just left the room," she said, soothingly. "I dare say he will be back directly. He was dreadfully anxious: he would not let any one but himself carry you up-stairs, and he looked so white and frightened that I felt quite sorry for him." But Catherine made no reply to this: some old refrain was ringing in her ears with dizzy persistence, "And to be wroth with one

we love,"—how did it go on?—"to be wroth," "to be wroth," beat like tiny hammers in her brain, but it was some time before the next line occurred to her.

"Oh, I have got it!" she said presently, to Elsie's alarm, for she thought Mrs. Romney was delirious: "and to be wroth with one we love doth work like madness on the brain: but my Romney, God bless him, is not mad."

When Dr. Fergusson had paid his visit, he went down to the library with rather a grave face. Oliver had just come in, and was talking to his brother. Romney listened gloomily to the doctor's opinion.

"A medical man has sharp eyes," Dr. Fergusson said, presently. "Mrs. Carfax is evidently suffering from some painful shock. I told you yesterday that her nerves were overstrained, and now I must repeat my orders, perfect quiet and no agitated discussion: body and mind must have entire rest, or I will not answer for the consequences. The quieter you keep her the better."

"You heard what Fergusson said," observed Romney, dryly, when the doctor left them. "If Catherine escapes a nervous illness I shall be much surprised." "What is the use of your telling me to go up to her?" he continued, irritably, when some further conversation had passed between them: "it will only excite Catherine and do no good."

"My dear fellow, if you could bring yourself to say a kind word to her, it would do all the good in the world. I have explained the whole thing to you. Even if Catherine has deceived you, as you say, surely she has been sufficiently punished. You must remember that those poor things put themselves under her protection. It was not Catherine's fault that her father came to Draycott."

"I know all about that," returned the Squire, sharply. "Elsie told me. Do you imagine that I blame Catherine for sheltering her own father, and when the old man was dying, too? Do you think I am made of adamant? Good heavens, if she had only trusted me, if she had come to me and said, 'Romney, my father and Eva are at Draycott, and I want you to help me to take care of them,' why, I would have helped with all my heart."

"I know that as well as you do, old man."

"And yet my wife misunderstands me. Look here, Oliver, I am an easy-going sort of fellow, as long as people take me the right way, but I have an obstinate temper when I am roused. It is Catherine's want of trust that cuts me to the heart. I did not think she had a thought hidden from me, and all these months she has practised this deception. Somehow I feel as though I were dreaming," continued the Squire, drawing his hand across his eyes: "it cannot possibly be Kitty who is afraid of her husband."

Lady Carfax wondered what was amiss when she saw her son's gloomy face at the dinner-table. The account of Catherine's fainting-attack had reached her on her return home, and she had gone up at once to her daughter-in-law's room to pet and condole with her.

"She looks flushed and weak, and her eyes are far too bright," she observed, but, to her surprise, Romney made no response: he was

evidently in a bad humor, a very rare occurrence with the Squire; but Lady Carfax with much tact held her peace, and resolved to question Oliver afterwards, but directly after dinner Catherine sent for him.

She was lying on her couch by the open window, and looked ill and depressed.

"Is he very angry with me, Oliver?" she asked, as he sat down by her.

"He is more hurt than angry. Oh, Catherine, if you had only taken my advice and trusted him, all this trouble would have been averted. There is not a more generous fellow living than Romney."

"Do you think I do not know that,—I who adore him?" in a voice of strong emotion. "Oh, how miserably weak I have been! And yet—and yet—if it were all to come over again, I should do the same."

"I am sorry to hear you say that." And Oliver's tone was somewhat repressive.

"Why should I not say it, if it be true? I was a coward on my father's account, and as long as he lived I should have acted like one. Oliver, what is to become of Eva? I cannot bear to leave her in that house, she is such a nervous little creature."

"Romney has arranged for her to come here: Elsie and I are to fetch her to-morrow." Then Catherine burst into passionate tears.

"Oh, how good he is, Oliver! Do beg him to come to me. I cannot rest until I ask his forgiveness. I will humble myself to him, and he shall say what he likes to me, if he will only forgive me in the end."

"Oh, he will forgive you right enough," returned Oliver, with assumed cheerfulness, "but if I were you I would leave all these explanations until to-morrow. Romney is a bit down to-night: you must give him time." But Catherine interrupted him:

"Do you mean that he will not come near me,—that no message, however urgent, will bring him to me?"

"Oh, that is putting it too strongly," returned Oliver, kindly. "You are too emotional, Catherine. There is no use working yourself into a fever. Look at it like a sensible woman: you have offended your husband by your want of confidence, and he feels himself badly used; he is not inclined to make it up to-night, but to-morrow he will be more like himself. Now, what is the most sensible line of conduct to pursue? Why, to send him a nice affectionate message by me, and then go to bed and take your sleeping-draught. Don't you agree with me, Catherine?"

"No," she replied, and a strange look came into her beautiful eyes, "no, I do not agree with you; but you mean well, Oliver, and you have been very kind to me, my dear brother. Now go down-stairs to Elsie, for I cannot talk any more, and wish Gran good-night for me."

"And you will go to bed?"

"Oh, yes, I shall go to bed," in a dreary voice, "but I am not ready just yet." But as she put out her hand to dismiss him he felt it was burning.

"She looks on the brink of a nervous attack," thought Oliver, as he went down-stairs, "but it is no use trying to turn Romney from his purpose, and he absolutely refused to go near her: if he would only give her a good blowing up and settle it that way, it would be far better for Catherine; she is such an impetuous creature, she will never give him time to come round of his own accord."

No, indeed: Oliver was perfectly right there. Even as he closed the drawing-room door behind him, Catherine was standing by her couch smoothing her dark hair with nervous fingers, and a minute later she crept with soft cautious steps to the library. The lamp was unlighted, but the clear moonlight shone full on Romney's face as he sat in his high-backed chair by the window; his pipe was still unlighted, and there was something forlorn and unrestful in his attitude that touched the wife's heart very keenly.

The next moment her arms were round his neck and she was leaning over him.

"You would not come to me,—Oliver told me so. You were quite right, love; it was for me to come to you. Do you think I could sleep until I asked you to forgive me?"

"Catherine, what madness is this?" he said, hastily. "Do you want to drive me crazy with your inconsiderate conduct? Do you know you are ill, that Dr. Fergusson says that you are to be kept perfectly quiet, that you are on no account to leave your room? and yet you are guilty of this folly."

"I am guilty of no folly in asking my husband's forgiveness," she said, sadly, for this repulse frightened her. "If I were dying, I would try and reach you somehow. Oh, Romney, let me stay with you a moment! let me speak to you!" for he had taken her up in his arms and was carrying her swiftly to the door.

"Not one word," he said, between his teeth. "I will not be disobeyed like this. I told Oliver there should be no talk to-night: to-morrow I will tell you what I think: if you wish me to forgive you, you will respect my wishes to-night."

"Very well," she said, faintly, and he laid her down carefully on her couch. She averted her face with a sob. He stood beside her a moment, hesitated, and then stooped down and kissed her forehead.

"Try to sleep," he said, in a gentler voice. "I shall be sitting up late, and I shall not disturb you." And then he left the room.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A HARD LESSON.

Hang there like fruit, my soul,
Till the tree dies.

Cymbeline.

"TRY to sleep." Only a man could have said that.

Sleep, when every pulse was beating and every nerve quivering! when the shooting pain in her temples amounted to positive agony! when thought was confused and yet active, and still the tiny hammers

in her brain beat incessantly to the refrain "and to be wroth with one we love"—but again the last line failed her.

Mind and body were alike worn out by the strange tension of the last few weeks, and in her weakness and despondency Catherine was no longer able to discriminate or judge with any degree of calmness. For the moment she seemed utterly forsaken and desolate: Romney had put her away from him; he refused to listen to her explanation; the weight of his anger had crushed her, and in her morbid self-abandonment she fancied that he had ceased to love her.

"I have disappointed him," she thought; "he will never think the same of me again: to-morrow he will forgive me, at least he will bring himself to tell me so, but he will never trust his Kitty again."

All her life long Catherine never looked back on that hour without shuddering: her disordered fancies made even the clear white moonlight a terror to her; she felt as though she were possessed by some nightmare; she had no strength to leave her couch; a numbness seemed creeping over her; the cold pitiless light weighed down her heavy eyelids; she shivered and longed for darkness.

A timid knock at the door failed to arouse her: it was repeated, and then a little white figure glided between her and the moonlight, and the comforting touch of cool human hands was laid on her burning temples.

"Is that you, Elsie?"

"Yes, dear. I have come to wish you good-night. Why are you lying here? Do you know how late it is? eleven; and you have not begun to undress."

"I have no strength to move," she returned, faintly. "I have tried to rise, and I cannot. Elsie, I think my heart is broken. If Romney changes to me I cannot live."

A footstep that had followed Elsie down the corridor paused outside the half-open door. Catherine's weak tones reached the unseen auditor.

"You must be dreaming, my poor dear," returned Elsie, in a compassionate voice. "Do you know what you are saying? It is absurd: you will think so yourself to-morrow."

"To-morrow!" in the same strange stifled voice; "but there is the night to come first. Elsie, listen to me: I feel I must talk. Do you know, I went down to Romney just now,—was it just now, or hours ago?—I wanted to kneel by him and to ask his pardon as though I were a little child. 'If I did wrong it was for my father's sake; but I will never hide a thought from you again,—never,—never!' that is what I would have said to him; but at my first word he silenced me."

"Oh, no! impossible!"

"Ah, but he did! he told me that I was ill, and that I ought not to have left my room. I was too weak to argue with him; but when he carried me back and told me to try and sleep, I could have laughed aloud in my agony. Sleep! with this sickness at my heart!"

"I will go down to the Squire: he has no right to be so hard to you. Let me go, dear Mrs. Romney." But Catherine held her fast.

"No, you shall not go: he has every right to be hard with me, and I will bear my punishment meekly. Do you know that he has

never before spoken an angry word to me,—never, since I have been his wife, his most happy wife? To-morrow he will tell me that I have grieved him to the heart, that my want of trust has been a sin and shame, and I shall not answer him a word: he shall say what he will to me, and I shall only love him more.”

“He will certainly forgive you: he knows now all that you have suffered for your father’s sake.”

“Yes, he knows it all now. Elsie, do you know that my poor father blessed me? he called me ‘his good faithful daughter,’ and bade God bless me, over and over again.”

“And you were with him when he died?”

“Yes: I held him in my arms. Just at the last he wandered, and did not know us, but his words were very sweet. ‘Where the wicked cease from troubling,’—we heard him murmur that,—‘and where the weary are at rest.’ Do you think Romney will let me put those words over his tomb?” But as Elsie was about to answer her, a dark figure stood in the door-way.

“I am here, Catherine.—Elsie, thank you for taking care of her.” And as Elsie rose, Romney took her place.

When the door closed behind the girl he knelt down beside his wife’s couch. “The door was open, and I heard my name,” he whispered. “Darling, I was too hard to you; but we must forgive each other.” And as Catherine’s weak arms drew his face down to hers his reconciling kiss spoke more than words.

“I do not deserve to be so happy,” were Catherine’s last words that night when she had ended her child-like confession and Romney had again and again assured her of his forgiveness. “Dear, it has been a hard lesson; but if you will trust your Kitty again she will never disappoint you.”

“That is well,” he returned, with his old kindly smile. “But now you are utterly exhausted: go to sleep, like a good child.” And Catherine obediently closed her eyes.

After all, Catherine paid dearly for her lesson. Not even her husband’s generous forgiveness or the consciousness of his undiminished love could avert the threatened mischief. When morning came, Catherine could not rise from her bed: a low nervous fever had laid hold of her, and as Romney listened to her confused wanderings as she lived through those miserable hours again, his honest heart was full of pity and remorse.

Catherine believed herself still under the cloud of her husband’s displeasure, and would entreat his forgiveness over and over again. “If you love me less I shall die,” she would say to him. “I will not live without your love.”

When she grew better, it was touching to see her utter weakness and dependence on him. “I thought I was going to die,” she said to him once, “but God has been very good to us. When I get well I mean to be a better wife to you: you shall never again have cause to complain of me.”

“The old Kitty is good enough for me,” he would say, wistfully, for the look of pain in her eyes saddened him: it was a new thing to

hear Catherine accusing herself; he longed with a longing that surprised himself to hear her frank laugh again and the droll merry speeches that had gladdened his daily life.

This gentle saddened Catherine was a new development; but his mother comforted him.

"Catherine is too weak to throw off her sad thoughts," she said, very sensibly. "You must take her away: you know Dr. Fergusson recommended a thorough change. Elsie has offered to take Eva back with her to Banksland and will keep her willingly until her marriage. Why not take Catherine abroad? Harry will be quite safe with me." And, after some demur, Romney acted on this advice. The plan answered well, and Catherine soon recovered tone and spirits among snow mountains and Swiss valleys, and her sensitive nature gathered new strength. Romney always called it their second honey-moon; and though he sometimes remarked that his old Kitty had never come back, one thing was certain, that he never loved his wife so well as he did now when he saw returning health and peace stamped on her sweet face and knew in his heart of hearts that the new Kitty was a dearer and a wiser woman.

THE END.

THE SOCIETY OF THE CINCINNATI.

THE diligent reader of newspapers in some of our Eastern cities may observe, on the dates following the Fourth of July and Washington's Birthday, some account of the stated meetings of the Society of the Cincinnati. These reports are invariably brief, and they usually occupy but an obscure position in the list of proceedings and celebrations incident to these national holidays. To most young readers the name of the Society and its objects are alike unintelligible. During other days of the year one may observe no calls for special meetings, no outward indications that the Cincinnati have an existence. There is little, indeed, connected with the present status of the Society to recall a time when the fact of its establishment was deemed of sufficient importance to claim the abilities of orators and pamphleteers in three kingdoms for its attack or defence.

The Society of the Cincinnati dates its birth in that perilous period for our country which occurred between the cessation of hostilities with England and the adoption of a national constitution. The victorious but poverty-stricken army under General Washington lay encamped at Newburg, on the steep slopes that overlook the Hudson. At their feet flowed the historic river which was to be forever associated with the triumphs and the treason of their cause, and its waters washed the shores of their chief city, where ten thousand of the enemy's troops still lay intrenched. The expected treaty with Great Britain was delayed by such interminable lengths of red tape that even the patience of Franklin was sorely tested. John Adams lingered for eight months in the anterooms of Louis before the preliminary articles for the treaty of Paris were signed on November 30, 1782. The last blood of the Revolution was shed shortly after that date.

What should be the future of this devoted army? To the members of those thinned ranks the present, indeed, was of more immediate concern. Very many of them were in extreme destitution. No pension-list was thought of. The men looked in vain to Congress for arrears of pay already earned. A proposition to allow the officers half-pay after disbanding was vigorously opposed by the new saviors of the country who had sprung into notice after the war was over. The military expenditures for the seven preceding years had averaged twenty million dollars per annum. The war estimate for 1782 was eight million dollars. Yet in the first five months of the year the whole sum raised by the States was only twenty thousand dollars,—less than one day's expenses. Washington wrote to Congress in October, "The long-suffering army is almost exhausted. Their patriotism and distress have seldom been paralleled, never been surpassed. It is high time for peace."

Privations like these were common to officers and men. But associated with the former were foreigners of rank and culture who had joined their fortunes with those of the Continental army. The pros-

pect of disbanding was, to these transatlantic heroes, a prospect of final separation. A common danger had riveted their friendships. A common success had united their fame. But with the great work finished the time was near at hand when they should be called upon to say farewell to the sturdy heroes whom they had aided in creating a new empire. From this sentiment sprang the idea of forming a fraternal league by which they should be united in membership, however widely separated by fortune, and by which the memory of their deeds and of their friendships might be conveyed to their children. Who first suggested the Society has been considered uncertain. Some suppose that the original idea came from Washington himself. The active work of calling a preliminary meeting was done by General Knox. But there is much about the foundation of the Society and the framing of its original declarations which suggests the mind and methods of Baron Steuben. This brilliant and distinguished man is a fair type of the modern crusader whose errand is the promotion of freedom. Born in Magdeburg, Prussia, in 1730, Steuben was a veteran soldier, and had served with Frederick the Great in several wars. His interest in the American cause amounted to a passion. At the age of forty-seven, when enthusiasm in most natures has cooled, he surrendered a life-position under his own government, with an assured competency, to engage in our war as a volunteer. He joined the American army during the horrors of Valley Forge, and every school-boy knows the story of his work there. He served for years without pay, and received tardily from Congress, in 1790, an insignificant annuity.

A knightly spirit such as Steuben naturally exerted an influence over his companions. Moved by his cogent arguments, they held frequent deliberations on the subject of a social organization. These took definite shape in the election of delegates, one officer from each regiment of the army. They convened at Newburg, May 10, 1783. After very little had been done, there was an adjournment until the 13th, when the representatives again assembled at General Steuben's head-quarters. At this meeting, which continued in session for more than a month, Steuben was chosen president. Articles of a constitution, three in number, were finally adopted, and read as follows: "First: An incessant attention to preserve inviolate those exalted rights and liberties of human nature for which they had fought and bled, and without which the high rank of a rational being is a curse instead of a blessing. Second: An unalterable determination to promote and cherish between the respective States that union and national honor so essentially necessary to their happiness and the future dignity of the American Empire. Third: To render permanent the cordial affection subsisting among the officers; this spirit will dictate brotherly kindness in all things, and particularly extend to the most substantial acts of beneficence, according to the ability of the Society, towards those officers and their families who, unfortunately, may be under the necessity of receiving it."

As the best method by which to illustrate the sincerity of the sentiment expressed in the third article, it was decided that an initiation-fee should be fixed to the amount of one month's pay from each

member. The monthly pay, at that time, varied according to rank, from major-general, one hundred and eighty dollars, to lieutenant of infantry, twenty-six dollars and sixty cents. The young association at once acknowledged the danger of maintaining a standing military force in a free civil government. From this acknowledgment arose the title of the Society, and the clause which adopted it is thus worded: "The members, holding in high veneration the character of that illustrious Roman, Lucius Quintus Cincinnatus, whose example they follow by returning to their citizenship, think they may with propriety denominate themselves the Society of the Cincinnati."

In order that members in widely-severed localities might have more ready communication, it was determined that State Societies should be formed, to be officered and conducted in the same manner as the general Society, and to report thereto at its regular meetings. One of the earliest motions which was adopted directed the President-General of the Society to transmit a badge of the order to various foreign officers, among whom were named Counts Rochambeau and D'Estaing. The designs for this and other decorations were intrusted to Major L'Enfant. This gentleman came to America as aide to Steuben. After the Revolution he remained in this country, following the calling of civil engineer, and the plan of the city of Washington was made by him. His designs for the medal and eagle of the Cincinnati are thus described: "A displayed bald eagle in gold, the head, neck, legs, and tail-feathers of white enamel flecked with gold. The eyes of precious stones. Upon its breast is a medallion, in white and blue enamel, charged as follows. On the obverse the principal figure is Cincinnatus reclining upon his plough. On the reverse the sun rises over a city with open gates. Below, hands joined support a heart, with the motto '*Esto perpetua*.'"¹ There was also a certificate of membership with a very curious design drawn by Aug. Le Belle. Copies of this document, lithographed on parchment in France, are still to be found in the hands of descendants of the original members.

As soon as the initiatory business of the meeting was completed, a committee of three, Generals Heath, Steuben, and Knox, was appointed to wait upon General Washington with a copy of the constitution and request him to honor the Society by placing his name at the head of the list. The meeting remained in session until the 19th of June, on which day Washington was elected President and a general meeting was ordered to be held in the following year.

It may seem strange even at this day, and it was still more strange to that honest group of undoubted patriots, that their motto, "*Esto perpetua*," became a veritable millstone about their necks. It had been decided that the membership of the Cincinnati should descend to the eldest son or next of kin surviving. We need not pause here to dis-



MEDAL OF THE SOCIETY OF
THE CINCINNATI.

cuss the question whether this was unjust or unwise. It was simply un-American. The extreme opposition which was thus aroused against the Society on the threshold of its career, at a period when nearly every custom and tradition was in keeping with their proposition, indicates that a high ideal of liberal government was already firmly fixed in the minds of our people.

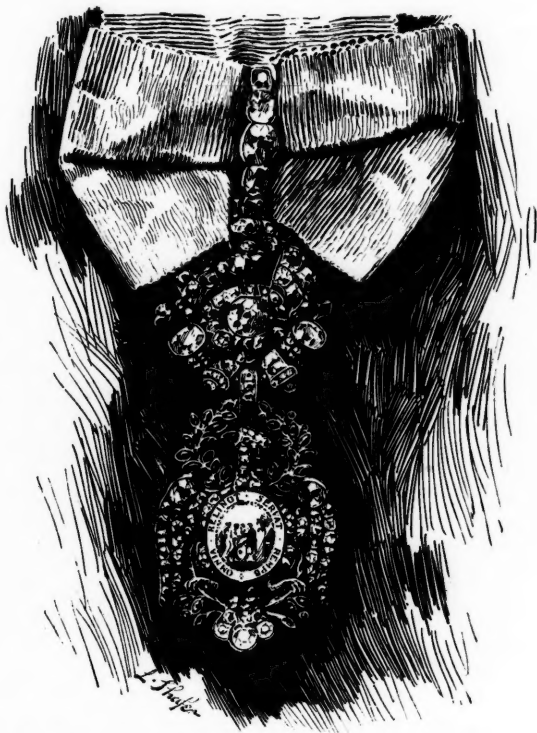
The controversy raged with unexpected fervor throughout the States. It even extended to the restless lovers of liberty beyond the Atlantic. Mirabeau, then an exile, sojourning in London, published a volume of several hundred pages, the first printed work of the great agitator which bore his name, in which he vigorously protested against the Order of the Cincinnati. He declared the Society, as now constituted, more dangerous than the Order of the Garter or that of the Golden Fleece. He likened it to the Society of St. Stephen of Tuscany, which, he asserts, "was founded by Cosmo de Medicis to celebrate the overthrow of liberty in Italy."

The legislatures of the several States became alarmed by the contention, and appointed committees to inquire into the actual powers and intentions of the Society. Without an exception, the reports of these committees were unfavorable to its existence under the provisions then in force. Rhode Island's Assembly passed an act disfranchising the members of the Cincinnati. That of Massachusetts declared it "dangerous to the peace, liberty, and safety of the Union." In France the objections were made light of, and the Society was warmly advocated. There sprang up a rivalry among officers entitled to membership as to who might first obtain their medals. The original institutes comprehended only officers of the army. But in France those of the navy presented their claims for membership. French officers in both branches of the service started a subscription which reached the sum of one hundred and twenty thousand livres. This amount was offered to the general Society in America, but was respectfully declined. The French navy, after having been pronounced eligible, caused to be made a magnificent copy of the decorations of the Order, set in diamonds. This costly emblem was sent as a tribute of respect to the President-General, Washington, and has since been worn by his successors in office on every public occasion of importance in the history of the Society.

Amid the excitements of the controversy concerning it, the embryo Society approached with anxiety the date of its first general meeting. This had been called for May 5, 1784, at the State-House in Philadelphia. In the mean time the formalities necessary to the termination of the war were at last concluded. The treaty of peace was signed at Paris September 3, 1783. The British army evacuated New York on the 25th of November, and on the 23d of December Washington delivered his farewell address to the army. As the time for the general meeting of the new Society drew near, the mind of Washington was seriously disturbed. He was personally unfriendly to hereditary descent, yet he disliked to oppose the wishes of fellow-members. Many of these clung tenaciously to the idea. Alexander Hamilton spoke and wrote eloquently in its behalf. Colonel Winthrop Sargent

observed, with grim humor, that "most of the members would have very little else to leave to their children." It may be well to mention, in passing, that the metropolis of Ohio owes its name to this Colonel Sargent, of Massachusetts. Being stationed in 1789 at a little settlement of three log houses then known as Losanteville, he took the responsibility of naming the future city after his beloved medal of Cincinnatus.

Washington spared no pains to ascertain both individual and gen-



BADGE OF THE SOCIETY OF THE CINCINNATI, PRESENTED BY OFFICERS OF THE NAVY OF FRANCE TO GENERAL WASHINGTON. (FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY R. H. ROSE & SON, PRINCETON, N.J.)

eral opinion. He corresponded with Lafayette, Jefferson, and others on the subject. When he asked Thomas Jefferson for suggestions, that radical revolutionist answered in no uncertain tones. "No modification of its constitution would be unobjectionable," was his reply, "excepting such as would amount to annihilation." John Adams also wrote from Paris, "The formation of the Society was the first step taken to deface the beauty of our temple of liberty." A still more important and menacing note of opposition was sounded from the general Congress of the States, then in session at Annapolis. A

measure was there considered to deprive members of the Cincinnati of citizenship unless the obnoxious clause were withdrawn entirely from the articles.

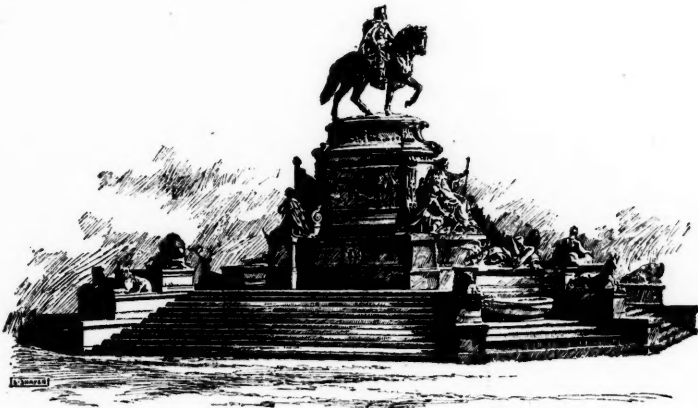
Under this lowering cloud of distrust the first general meeting assembled, on the 5th of May, at Philadelphia. A consultation had been held the day before at the City Tavern, on Second Street near Walnut. As nothing was there accomplished, the delegates, fifty in number, and representing all of the thirteen States, assembled according to the call. The opinions of the various communities represented were inquired for, and great variance of opinion was developed. The South Carolina delegation reported "general dissatisfaction and distrust," while their near neighbors from Georgia submitted an exactly contrary report. On the first day Washington vacated the chair and spoke to the subject. He said that but for the very distinguished foreign element in the Society he would advise them to make "one great sacrifice more to the world" and abolish the Order, retaining only its charitable provisions. He had already contributed to the Society the amount of seven individual subscriptions, and, in a private letter to the secretary, proposed to make a gift of five hundred dollars. On the following day Washington was still more emphatic. "In a very long speech, and with much warmth and agitation," says Colonel Sargent's journal of proceedings, "he declared his determination to resign from membership." The whole subject, however, was ultimately smothered in committee. On the 15th of May General Washington was unanimously chosen as President-General, General Gates as Vice-President, and General Knox as Secretary.

From so stormy a beginning the Society drifted speedily into placid waters. Few subsequent events in its history have been recorded. The general Society, which meets triennially, has had before it no business of national importance for many years. Washington continued to hold the presidency until his death. Alexander Hamilton succeeded him, but his own tragic death soon followed. The arrangements for Hamilton's public funeral in New York were placed in the hands of the Society. An inscription still remains in the robing-room of old Trinity Church attesting in pathetic terms the feelings of the members towards their lamented chief. For a long series of years the Hon. Hamilton Fish has been the President-General. The last general meeting was held at Baltimore in 1890.

The ominous reception given to the Order discouraged a continuance of the smaller organizations. As early as 1804 the State societies of Delaware and Connecticut had been abandoned. The latter was refused a charter by the State legislature. In 1822 the Virginia society was dissolved. Its funds, amounting to fifteen thousand dollars, were contributed to Washington College. The continued falling off in membership of the remaining societies indicated a decay of interest. At the formation of the Order the largest lists of members were—Massachusetts, 333; Pennsylvania, 268; and New York, 234. In 1890 these figures had declined—Massachusetts to 84, New York to 62, and Pennsylvania to 40. The last original member, Major Robert Burnett, died in 1854, at Newburg, not far from the spot where the

Society had its birth. The occasional election of honorary members to the State organizations connects them with some distinguished names. General W. T. Sherman became an honorary member in 1879, and Horatio Seymour in 1885.

The Pennsylvania society was organized in October, 1783. It was chartered by the State Assembly in 1791. The most important enterprise thus far connected with its history has been the proposed erection of a monument to Washington. A fund for this purpose was started by its members as far back as 1819 with an appropriation of three thousand dollars. A few years ago, the fund having increased by that time to about a quarter of a million dollars, designs were solicited. An equestrian statue by Professor Siemering, of Berlin, was the one accepted. The monument is now so near completion that the members recently obtained consent of Councils to place it in



PROPOSED WASHINGTON MONUMENT.

Independence Square. The controversy which sprang up on this subject is still fresh in the memory of many readers. By order of the court, this permission was rescinded, and the monument is likely to be erected in Fairmount Park, where its artistic design and noble proportions may be seen to greater advantage. The model of the statue suggests Rauch's famous memorial to Frederick the Great on the Unter den Linden in Berlin. But the treatment of the accessories has sufficiently nationalized the Washington statue, and the four groups of figures which surround the base, while they add little to the artistic strength of the composition, will greatly enhance its popular interest. The city will possess in this memorial one of the most beautiful works of art that have ever been erected for out-door decoration.

It is interesting to note, in reviewing the history of the Cincinnati, the great stride which has been made towards true republicanism. A glance backward into the early days of the Society summons up a vision of powdered wigs and cocked hats and gold-laced costumes and

glistening shoe-buckles and sumptuous equipages. The old Continentals did what they felt called to do for liberty. They upheld honor, they kept faith, they protected the weak, they provided for the widow and the orphan. In all these ways they strengthened the foundations of the government which their good swords had won. But it was still too soon to ignore the claims of rank and privilege. To the membership of the Cincinnati only officers of the line were eligible, men of consequence and authority. A goodly number of them were slaveholders. It has been a chief blessing of our day that liberty came to mean more than it ever meant before; when privileges of the few became rights for the many; when the army that freed the slave and cemented afresh the crumbling pillars of the state should form a new order of the Cincinnati in that Grand Army of the Republic where the lowest soldier from the ranks is as welcome as the loftiest chief, and the national ensign spreads its benediction alike over all.

John Bunting.

A CRY FROM THE DARK.

COME to my grave, Beloved; pause here beside me;
 Gather these posies!
 Out of my heart they grew,—fed on my spirit.
 Long have I lain here,—lain here and waited,—
 Long, yet you came not: where have you lingered?
 Blithe winds have whispered you, glad birds have carolled,
 So you missed nothing, though I was silent:
 Yet once you loved me,—Love is immortal,—
 How my heart aches with it, here where I wait for you!

Bend low and listen! Do you not hear me?
 Long time you said that my voice was the music
 Heart-beats were set to,—Heaven sang its chorus:
 Do you not hear, now the grass grows above me?

Gather these posies
 Sprung from my grave-sod! Will they not bring you
 Breath of my kisses,—thrill as when fingers
 Death's clasp has stiffened clung to you, held you?

Nay, you pass by me,—bound on what errand?
 Glad Life ensnares you: vainly I call you:
 I must wait longer.

To-day and to-morrow—
 Countless to-morrows—may find me without you,
 But Death *will* befriend me,—kind Death will bring you
 Home to this grave-house,—here where I wait you.
 We *shall* take hands again: Love is immortal!

Louise Chandler Moulton.

A PASTEL.

[LIPPINCOTT'S NOTABLE STORIES, NO. III.*]



HE Comte de Paris was coming to America. Madame Céleste read the news in the *Morning Record*, and then pressed it rapturously to her heart, calling it an evangelist among newspapers.

"You'll muss it," said Angèle, always practical; and Madame, suddenly reminded that it was only borrowed, smoothed it out over her knee with fluttering hands.

Angèle calmly continued her stitching: she cared not a whit about the Comte de Paris.

"I shall present you, my daughter!" cried Madame Céleste, excitedly; "you shall kiss the hand of our prince——"

"I don't kiss any man's hand," interrupted Angèle, brusquely. "What do Americans want with princes? Sam says——"

Madame Céleste raised her delicate hand with a little gesture of entreaty.

"Spare me the wisdom of ce Monsieur Sam!" she cried. "Of course my daughter has no sympathy with me in my happiness: I forgot."



* With the March number began the issue of this series of short stories, one of which is to appear each month during the current year. On the completion of the series the stories will be reprinted in a small volume, and the royalty on the sale of this book will belong to the author of that one of the ten tales which receives the popular verdict.

To determine this choice, our readers are invited to signify each month, by postal card addressed to the editor of *Lippincott's Magazine*, their opinions as to the merits of the short story in the last issue. Those who thus report as to each of the ten tales, from March to December inclusive, will receive, free of charge, a copy of the collected edition of "Notable Stories."

There was a pathetic note in Madame's voice.

Angèle pulled her needle jerkily through her work, and broke her thread. She rocked nervously to and fro as she broke off a new thread, drawing it out to arm's length, and biting it with her strong white teeth. The rocking-chair creaked noisily.

"If you could but cultivate a little repose!" sighed Madame Céleste.

She herself sat gracefully erect in her straight-backed chair, her white hands placidly folded. Gradually a smile began to play about her lips: her thoughts had left Angèle, and rocking-chairs, and all such small ills of life, and were travelling, as Madame's thoughts were apt to travel, back into the past.

There was a stately, exquisite dignity about Madame Céleste, which must have emanated from within, as it certainly was not the result of inches, though she wore her white hair pompadour and piled it high into elaborate coils and puffs to increase her stature. This coiffure was a thing of always; it rose as elegantly behind the tin coffee-pot of a morning as it did of an evening behind the tureen of thin soup. Madame Céleste was an anachronism: put a touch of rouge on the thin cheeks, and a tiny patch beneath the bright, sunken eyes, and before you would stand the court lady of a hundred years ago, in the thin disguise of a shabby black gown, shiny on the back, white at the seams, and patched at the elbows. Madame was like a pastel, soft, delicate, faintly colored: Angèle, her daughter, called Angy by every one except her mother, was the oil-color. No amount of rouge or patches would ever deceive people into thinking her anything but the daughter of her father, the late Luke Mullins, dealer in hides and tallow.

Madame Céleste had been untiring in her efforts to polish Angy into at least the semblance of a high-born demoiselle, but when after a struggle of twenty years she remained still a commonplace miss, with a gauche manner and awkward carriage, Madame Céleste bowed to the inevitable,—gracefully, of course, as it was Madame who bowed,—laid down her polishing-tools, and accepted Angy as a failure. It was a bitter moment, however, when she finally acknowledged to herself that her jewel was incapable of polish: she did not care for diamonds in the rough, and at times she even doubted whether hers was really a precious stone after all: could it be a common pebble? or at best a bit of quartz?

Madame's mind was capable of the most metaphysical distinctions: she disliked her daughter's personality, but she loved her daughter. Both Angy's faults and virtues irritated her; chiefly, perhaps, because they were like her late husband's, and about her husband Madame had never drawn any distinctions at all.

Perhaps if he had made a fortune out of his hides and tallow her judgment of him might have grown more tolerant with years, but all he left her was his name, and that she immediately consigned to oblivion, emerging as Madame Céleste from her quickly-discarded widow's weeds.

The old countess, her mother, had considered rough, vulgar, big-hearted Luke a lesser evil than starvation, so Madame had married

him. She herself would have preferred the other alternative. She dutifully accepted her plebeian lover, however, was distantly civil to him for twenty years, and then buried him. Possibly Luke was not sorry to be buried: hides and tallow had played him false towards the end, and life by Madame's side was a cheerless thing; besides, there was some one waiting for him up above, a gentle, girlish little wife, underbred, but loving. No, on the whole Luke was not sorry to be buried. Nobody was sorry but Angy: Angy broke her heart.

Madame Céleste was enthusiastically French, though it was forty years since her father, a visionary soul, and the last leaf on the dying family tree, had migrated to America in search of fortune and found a grave. Madame was twenty at the time.

She left a lover behind, among the untended

vines and the crumbling châteaux, but she went without

question: what question could there be when both

of them were

poor? Madame's

heart, however,

remained in

France, and she

had to do with-

out one after that,

which was of little

consequence to

her, but of a great

deal to Luke Mullins.

France kept her

allegiance, too, as well

as her heart: she was

more royalist than the

Comte de Paris him-

self. He, good soul,

after a fifty-years' ac-

quaintance with his royal self, may have had some doubts as to his own absolute perfection; Madame had none. The thought of actually seeing him thrilled her loyal heart. It would be, she felt, like a bit of the old life she had been starving for so long. Madame's smile grew dreamier as she dwelt upon it, and a tender dimness softened her bright eyes. The past came back to her, fresh and clear as yesterday. The old gray château rose before her, its sweet, quaint garden about it, its broad, low fields beyond; there were the prim poplars stretching away in stiff lines along the white, straight road, and coming through the dust beneath them Monsieur le Curé, his soutane flapping in the wind. Old mère Marcelle's crooning reached her faintly, and the noise of her sabots, as she clattered to and fro with water from the well. Then, blotting out all else, rose her lover's face, and Madame's lips ceased smiling, but her eyes grew softer still.



THE DAUGHTER OF HER FATHER, THE LATE LUKE MULLINS.

"Perhaps I may get news of him now," she mused.

Madame dreamed happily on, living her youth over again, while in the window opposite, pressing close to catch the fading light, Angy worked patiently on at her stitching, which, if she were very diligent, would bring them in as much as four shillings a day.

Suddenly Madame Céleste roused herself and smoothed the paper on her knees again, nervously.

"Have you a little money to spare, Angèle chérie?" she said. "I shall want a few dollars soon."

"We'll only just make out with the rent as it is," said Angy, reluctantly. "My being sick that time put us back so."

"Oh, well, a few little economies!" said Madame, airily. She was hopelessly unpractical.

Angy kept the purse, and, as far as she could see, there were no more economies left to be made. However, if her mother, whom she held in secret, timid adoration, needed it, she was prepared to try.

"I shall, of course, go to welcome the prince," Madame Céleste went on, "and I should wish to carry him a bunch of lilies,—lilies of France; a little offering of loyalty."

Angy dropped her sewing.

"Lilies! Why, they cost I don't know how much!"

"Yes," assented Madame, gently.

Angy was tired: she had been sewing all day, and her head ached. "I can't work any harder," she cried, desperately. "When it's anything in reason, I'm sure I'm ready and willing, but as to killing myself just to give a silly bunch of lilies to a man I don't care a rap about, I—well, I just can't!"

Madame's lip trembled. She was hurt to the heart. It was unreasonable of her, but it was Madame's way to be unreasonable.

"I shall not ask you to work any harder," she said. "I am sorry I spoke. It is no matter. There are many little things I can quite well do without: one gets to think some things necessities which are really only luxuries."

"I didn't mean it!" cried Angy, already repentant. "Of course if you want them I will help."

"No," said Madame, in a quivering voice: "they shall be bought with no unwilling sacrifice."

After dinner, when Angy had lighted the lamp, Madame Céleste brought out her sewing,—a dainty piece of embroidery, learned from the nuns in her early convent days. Angy was stitching shirts.

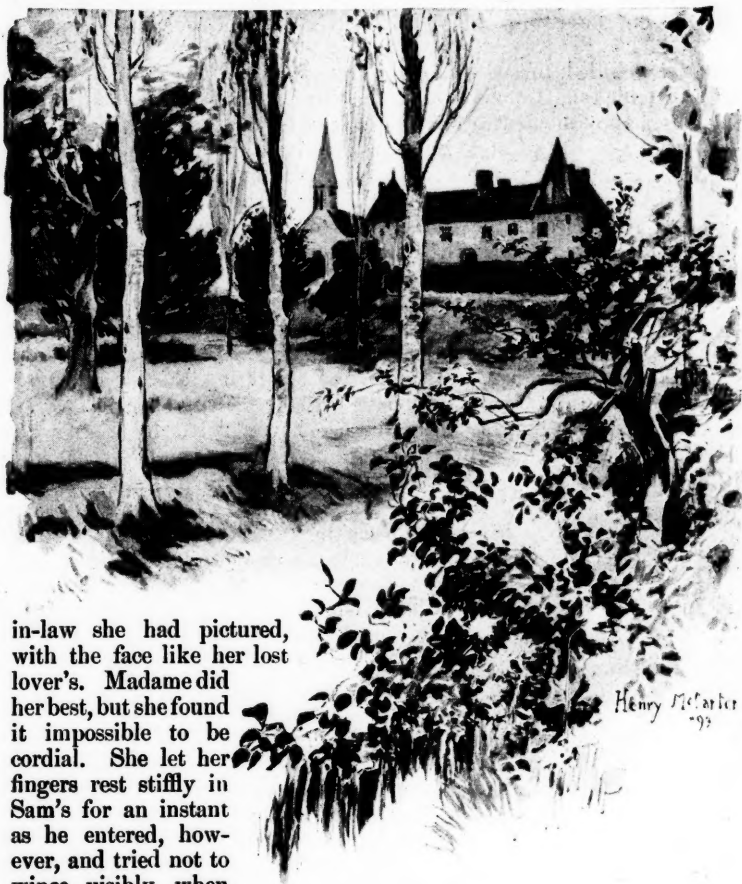
Somebody knocked shortly, with a brisk, business-like rap.

"It's Sam!" cried Angy, flushing prettily.

A small, trim, sandy-haired man entered thereupon, with a brisk, decided little step. Everything about Sam Sladen was on a small scale, except his self-confidence and his heart, but these left nothing to be desired. A thorough American in his irreverence and self-sufficiency, Sam stood in awe of nothing on earth save only Madame Céleste. In her stately presence he trembled and grew conscious of his insignificance.

Angy and he had been lovers ever since their public-school days,

and Madame Céleste two years before had given her formal consent. She had cherished a dream of marrying Angy as befitted the Comte de Bernannes's grandchild. It was her last dream, and she saw it fade as they had all faded. Sam was the reality, and he endured. It was hard to accept Sam Sladen, the book-agent, in the place of the titled son-



Henry McFarlane
'93

in-law she had pictured, with the face like her lost lover's. Madame did her best, but she found it impossible to be cordial. She let her fingers rest stiffly in Sam's for an instant as he entered, however, and tried not to wince visibly when he crushed them in his hearty grasp.

THE OLD GRAY CHÂTEAU.

"Well, how-dy-do, mother-in-law?" said Sam.

Madame could not suppress a little shiver at this familiarity: she thought the English phrase crude and vulgar.

"Think I'm a bit previous, don't you, ma'am?" said Sam, with quick perception, flushing under Madame's cold gaze.

Madame's shoulders answered him, but enigmatically, he not being versed in shrugs.

"Just back this afternoon," Sam ventured again. "I've been canvassing in Jersey. Did well, too, considering the book I had: 'Our Dusky Brother' it was this time."

Sam and Angy looked at one another and smiled. Every piece of good luck brought the wedding-day a little nearer. Madame Céleste, however, did not smile. Sam waited for her to say she was pleased at his success, but she only lifted her eyes for an instant, and said, indifferently,—
"Ah!"

Sam, chilled, turned to Angy for support, and Angy, in the shadow of the table-top, stretched out an encouraging hand, which he held for a short, happy moment before he said good-by.

The day of the Comte de Paris's arrival Madame Céleste went to her room and locked the door, turning the key softly in order not to attract Angy's attention. Then, still softly, she took down two small looking-glasses from the wall, glasses of that wavy, distorting type which might have been circulated instead of tracts by a society for the suppression of vanity. Madame stood them up against the wall, placing them one upon the other. She put a couple of flat-irons on the floor against the lower one, to keep it from slipping, and the upper one she braced with two chair-backs. Then she took her stand before this extemporized pier-glass. Madame was small, but the pier-glass was smaller: she was obliged to choose between viewing her feet or her head. Madame laid her hand on her heart, placed her feet in the second position, and with an expression of earnest gravity, watching the result anxiously in the two sections of wavy mirror, she courtesied low to the reflection of her rusty black petticoat.

Her knees trembled under her; they were very old and stiff, but they were very loyal; bend to their prince they must, and it behooved them to make ready. Up and down they went, the poor old knees, getting very weary and very shaky, but Madame was not to be satisfied until she could see the topmost puff of her stately white head below the pine frame of the mirror. So far only her eyes had appeared: the stiff old knees must bend lower.

"I am sadly out of practice!" sighed Madame Céleste.

She was much thinner and frailer than she had been six weeks before. Her pale lips had a pinched look, and there were darker lines beneath her eyes, which made them seem brighter and more sunken than ever. Madame had made her economies.

When she had at last succeeded in making her knees renew the days of their youth, she carefully brushed her plain black bonnet, smoothed out its well-worn strings, and inked the seams of her only gown. She laid the bonnet and an old-fashioned silk mantle over the back of a chair; the mantle was very shiny; Madame held it up to the light, and sighed; then she placed a pair of much-mended gloves and a fresh pocket-handkerchief beside it. Her heart beat with expectation as she made her simple preparations.

The rain was coming heavily down, making treacherous puddles in the uneven flagging, when she started on her pilgrimage the next morning. Angy had insisted upon her wearing rubbers, and had lent her her own, which were much too large and kept slipping off at the

heels. In one hand she carried the lilies for which she had saved and pinched, and in the other a very large umbrella; one of its ribs had become loosened from its rusty cotton covering, and stuck nakedly out, like a long skeleton finger. It mortified Madame greatly; she had not noticed it when she started. It tried her, too, being a dainty, tidy soul, that, having no hand with which to hold them, her skirts grew bedraggled and flapped damply about her ankles. It was a long walk, and the lilies and the umbrella were very heavy.

In the Comte de Paris's anteroom she took off her rubbers and left the umbrella.

"Madame Céleste, née de Bernannes," announced the attendant, opening the door of the hotel suite devoted to the prince.

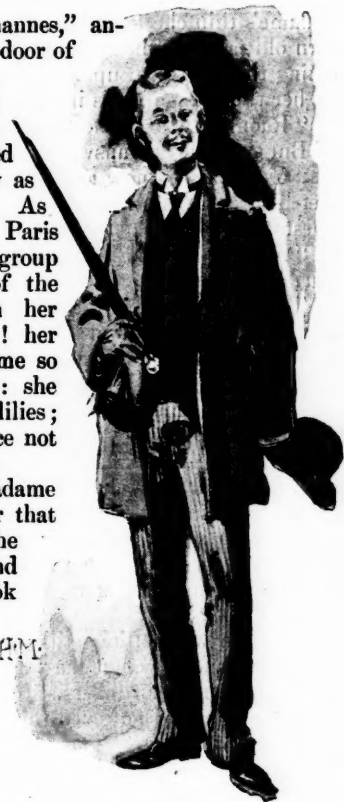
Madame advanced up the room with stately grace: one quite forgot the shabby bonnet and the dragged skirt. She was *grande dame* now as always; nothing could alter that. As she approached, the Comte de Paris stepped out from among the little group of gentlemen at the farther end of the room, and Madame Céleste began her long-practised courtesy. But, alas! her tired knees failed her, they had come so far, they were such stiff old knees: she faltered, swayed, and dropped the lilies; she would have fallen, had the prince not caught her and lifted her to her feet.

For the next half-hour Madame Céleste truly lived. Like a flower that blossoms only in its native air, she bloomed into sudden radiance and color. Her bearing, her manner, took on new and exquisite dignity and grace. She grew witty, spirituelle, epigrammatic. Her voice, her smile, her mien, all breathed a rare, delicate charm, like a fine subtle fragrance, a breath from out the stately drawing-rooms of the past. It was Madame Céleste who held court for that half-hour, not the prince.

But a half-hour is so short! Madame heard the door swing open again, and felt that hers was over. It was only one of the prince's suite who entered, however, a distinguished-looking man, white-headed, but erect and soldierly.

"Ah, de Courvalles, back already?" said the prince.

"I have been gone an hour, monsieur," answered the old man. "I feared I was late."



MONSIEUR SAM.

"Time in Madame's presence has flown!" said the prince, gallantly.

But for once Madame Céleste was ready with no graceful response.

"De Courvalles!" she cried, tremulously. She stood as if in a dream. Monsieur de Courvalles's voice and face wakened in her a vague, sweet recollection. The past seemed to sweep back, and she was young again: the shadow of the château walls fell on her once more as of old, its garden-odors reached her, the poplars rustled, and mère Marcelle's sabots clattered on the stones. Again it was the day when she and Raoul had said good-by. A faint, lovely flush stole into Madame's thin cheek, a soft, almost youthful light quivered over her worn old face, and her lips fell again into their old tender curves. Forgetting the eyes fixed upon her, the prince, etiquette, all, she stretched out her trembling hands in their shabby, ill-fitting gloves.

"Raoul! Raoul!" she cried.

But there was no answering light in Monsieur de Courvalles's eyes.

"You do not know me," said Madame, gently, her hands still outstretched. "It is no wonder, it is so many years since we met. I am Céleste, Raoul."

"Ah!" said Monsieur de Courvalles, vaguely, "I am charmed,—charmed, madame."

The far-away spring-time idyl had faded from his mind; it was buried under the roses of many summers and many winters' snows.

Madame Céleste dropped her hands. For one long, silent moment the old eyes met. Monsieur de Courvalles was troubled; it annoyed him to find his memory at fault,—respecting a lady, too! It was unpardonable.

A chill stole over Madame Céleste's heart. Slowly the expectation died out of her eyes, and the tender light, which had lent her face a sudden semblance of youth, faded away. Raoul had forgotten! Madame withdrew her eyes.

"It is pleasant to see a familiar face in a strange land, monsieur, and your name recalls memories of my childhood," she said, and smiled.

The rain was falling still when Madame started homeward. She had a free hand now, but she did not hold her skirts; they grew soaked and heavy, and her rubbers still slipped at the heels; but Madame did not care. She did not even think to turn the naked umbrella rib discreetly out of view. The umbrella was very heavy, but Madame's heart was heavier; it felt cold and still, like a dead thing. Raoul had forgotten her, forgotten even her name!

"You are quite wet, *ma mère*," said Angy, as she received the umbrella and took off the rubbers.

"It does not matter," said Madame Céleste.

"The soup is ready," said Angy. "I have been expecting you this hour."

It was a silent meal: something in Madame's face checked Angy's usual cheery commonplaces. When the lamp was lighted, Madame took her embroidery as usual: it was nearly finished. Angy glanced at her uneasily now and then, and wished that Sam would come in.

At last Madame put away her needle, and laid her worn thimble in its corner of her work-box. Then she folded her work carefully. It was finished. "Everything is finished," thought Madame.

She was not sorry: she was only very tired. She was like a child who had stayed through the play, had seen the end, and watched the curtain fall, and wanted to go home to bed. The play had been a sad one; the child was glad it was over; it was tired, and one of its illusions had been destroyed: the hero was not a hero, after all; he had come out before the curtain and bowed and smiled; the child had seen him plainly: he was



MADAME ADVANCED UP THE ROOM WITH
STATELY GRACE.

just like other men, only painted and bewigged.

"Help me to bed, Angèle," said Madame Céleste.

Sam came every night after that, and whispered loudly beside Madame's bed, but for once did not disturb her, for Madame, her white hair waving softly now about her wasted face, was babbling happily of childish sports, or laughing again with mère Marce^{lle}, or crying that she was waiting in the château garden and that Raoul had forgotten to come. And Sam would lean forward, and lay his rough plebeian hand softly on Madame's, and say, gently, "Poor mother-in-law!" stroking the frail old hand with a tender touch, half surprised at himself the while for the liberty he took.

When the fever broke, the doctor said that Madame Céleste was doing well.

"You will soon be better!" Angry cried, kissing her weak hands.

Madame smiled: she knew so much better than that. What more was there? Everything was finished.

"Angèle, *ma mie*," she said, one day, "you will be happy, I think; he is *bourgeois*, but he has a good heart, your Monsieur Sam." And Madame sighed.

Then by and by, with her hand in Angèle's, she fell asleep: she was very tired; she was glad to fall asleep.

Cornelia Kane Rathbone.



TRIUMVIRATE.

THREE things are great,—
 Conscience and will,
 And courage to fulfil
 The duties they create.
 The guarded gate
 To freedom opens wide
 To him who heeds
 The voice which speaks within.
 His will is strengthened, fortified,
 Against the power of sin,
 And unto victory leads.
 The end crowns all.
 No matter what betide,
 Him nothing shall befall.

Arthur D. F. Randolph.

NEW ST. LOUIS.

"WE went to a large hotel, called the Planters' House, a building like an English hospital, with long passages and bare walls, and skylights above the room doors for the free circulation of air. There were a great many boarders in it, and as many lights sparkled and glistened from the windows down into the street below, when we drove up, as if it had been illuminated on some occasion of rejoicing. It is an excellent house, and the proprietors have most bountiful notions of providing the creature comforts. Dining alone with my wife in our own room one day, I counted fourteen dishes on the table at once."

It is just fifty years since Charles Dickens wrote this description of his hotel experience in St. Louis, and the Planters' House of which he



PLANTERS' HOUSE, ST. LOUIS, 1893-1842.

speaks with such quaint candor has been torn down to make room for a new Planters' House, which cannot by any parity of reasoning be likened to an "English hospital," nor, indeed, to any building to be found in the country which Dickens helped to make famous. The new Planters' House, now in course of erection, will be one of the finest

hotels in America, and as much unlike the house in which the fourteen dishes were counted, as New St. Louis is unlike the city which the great novelist describes in "American Notes," and for which he, stern critic as he was, predicted even in the forties a grand future.

If the spirit of Charles Dickens pays a visit to St. Louis this year, it will be as astonished at the changes that have been brought about in the half-century as the thousands of travellers and visitors who, visiting St. Louis after an absence of a few years, look in vain for the landmarks which were then pointed out to them, and marvel at the complete manner in which the old has been swallowed up by the new in every feature and detail. The railroad facilities to and from St. Louis are unsurpassed, and as a result the city is already entertaining a large number of European and Eastern tourists on their way to the World's Fair.

It is as amusing as it must certainly be gratifying to St. Louisians to note the astonishment and indeed bewilderment of some of these visitors. Those who come to St. Louis for the first time are more than pleased with the undoubted evidences of substantial progress and prosperity, especially in manufacturing, and nearly all admit that their preconceived notions of the city did it a distinct injustice; but it is the man who thought he knew all about it and finds that he knew nothing, who realizes most fully the self-evident fact that the old has given way to the new, and that the St. Louis of to-day bears scarcely any resemblance to the St. Louis of thirty, or even fifteen, years ago. Indeed, some of those who have seen the city as recently as ten years ago are the loudest in their expressions of wonderment at the strides which have been made in the way of progress in general and architectural progress in particular.

Early last month a gentleman who spent several months in St. Louis during the war arrived at the Union Dépôt and directed the hackman who solicited his patronage to drive him to the Prairie House. The driver, who claimed to know every hotel in the city, expressed his regret at not being able to locate the house, and it was only after he had consulted with a competitor, who had been in the business more years than he had lived, that he was able to get at the location of the desired hostelry. Even then the information tendered did not console the visitor, who was loath to believe that what in his time had been a fashionable hotel a mile or two out of the city on the only rock road leading into the county, had long since been hemmed in by buildings, and that one-half of the ancient landmark had been actually cut down to enable a street to be constructed through it. But the fact remains that what was practically a country hotel within the memory of many besides the proverbial oldest inhabitant has long since ceased to be a hotel at all, and that the cable cars which run past its door carry passengers two or three miles farther before they reach the city limits.

This is merely an instance which can be duplicated a hundred times over, for the expansion of the city has been so remarkable that what was country during the war is city now, while the suburbs have extended into territory the bare existence of which was scarcely realized at that time by any save excursionists and hunters. One gentleman

who visited St. Louis this spring after an absence abroad of nearly thirty years asked to be taken to Camp Jackson, where, as he explained, his son was shot during the "late unpleasantness."

"To tell you the truth, I really don't know where Camp Jackson was," his guide explained. "I have lived here a good many years, and



ST. LOUIS MERCANTILE CLUB.

heard Camp Jackson spoken of repeatedly, but never had the curiosity to inquire as to its exact location."

"I can find it easily enough," was the reply. "It's in the woods on the Olive Street road, five or six blocks west of the old city limits at Nineteenth Street."

"There are no woods on Olive Street within four or five miles of Nineteenth Street," the guide promptly explained, "and if you are right as to location, Camp Jackson is the site of some of the best

residences in St. Louis, with several merchant millionaires residing in them."

Inquiries proved that the visitor knew more about the topography of the city than his guide, for what was Camp Jackson during the war is now a thickly-settled residence-section, three or four miles east of the city limits, and with tens of thousands of houses beyond it.

The same disappointments have met nearly every landmark- and relic-hunter who has "taken in" St. Louis this spring on his way to the World's Fair. An English gentleman who had for many years been a friend of Henry Shaw, the millionaire botanist, turned his steps soon after his arrival towards the corner of Seventh and Locust Streets, where Mr. Shaw many years ago built himself a sombre-looking but very comfortable residence, in which he entertained friends on the most lavish scale. In place of "Henry Shaw's house" the visitor found the New Mercantile Club, a building very different in appearance and elevation, and one of the handsomest business-men's clubs in the country. The spot is still the scene of continued hospitality, for the club is in the habit of obeying very literally the scriptural injunction as to the entertainment of strangers; but Henry Shaw's house has been pulled down, and reconstructed, out of the same material, in the splendid botanical gardens which he bequeathed to the city, and which have few equals in extent or magnificence in the entire world.

"I can well remember," remarked a manufacturer, "when the old University on Ninth Street and Washington Avenue was entirely in the country, Sixth Street being at that time regarded as the practical building limit. The policy of the university in building so far out into the woods was ridiculed when I was a boy, and it is amusing to recollect some of the remarks that were made, in view of the fact that the university has since been moved three miles farther from the river, and that it is now very much more down-town on Thirty-Sixth Street than it was on Ninth Street at the time I am mentioning."

Every old St. Louisian applied to has similar reminiscences; and perhaps the most interesting of all is that of one who has not yet attained the period of life allotted by the Psalmist, but who talks entertainingly of the time when he skated on a lake which covered a portion of ground on which the new Union Dépôt is now in course of erection. This lake, known as Chouteau's Pond, occupied a large area of the Mill Creek Valley, along which has been built one of the largest main sewers in the world. At the northwest corner of where the old pond was, and right at the old city limits, is located the magnificent new Union Dépôt of the Terminal Railroad Association, which will be available for traffic almost immediately.

A better type of New St. Louis than this magnificent structure it would be difficult to find, and the fact that it has been erected on what was once the very boundary of the city, but which is now the most central semi-down-town location that could possibly be found, is eloquent in the extreme of the progress made. Over four million bricks, twenty thousand square feet of marble, and twelve hundred tons of iron have been used on this structure, while two million three hundred and fifty thousand blocks of mosaic were used in the floors.

The train-shed is the largest and most convenient in the world. Its roof forms an arch of six hundred feet radius, and the height from the base to the centre span of the arch is one hundred feet. The shed is seven hundred feet long, and is so enormous in all its proportions that six million pounds of steel, one million square feet of hard-wood, and twenty thousand square feet of glass were required to complete it.

The grand waiting-room measures one hundred and twenty by sixty feet, and is sixty feet high. Its appointments are magnificent in every detail, and no less than three thousand incandescent lamps are used to secure perfect illumination. Externally the dépôt is handsome to a degree, and its massive tower with a grand clock lighted at night



FEDERAL BUILDING, ST. LOUIS.

by electricity will not be easily duplicated even in a month's journey. So elaborate and careful have been the plans of this structure that all trains will be backed into it, so that the locomotives will never enter the sheds, and there will be an absence of that unpleasant suggestion of sulphur which one looks for in a railroad dépôt of even moderate size. The dépôt will cost, by the time the last bill is paid, considerably over two million dollars, and the best railroad experts are of opinion that every dollar has been well and profitably spent.

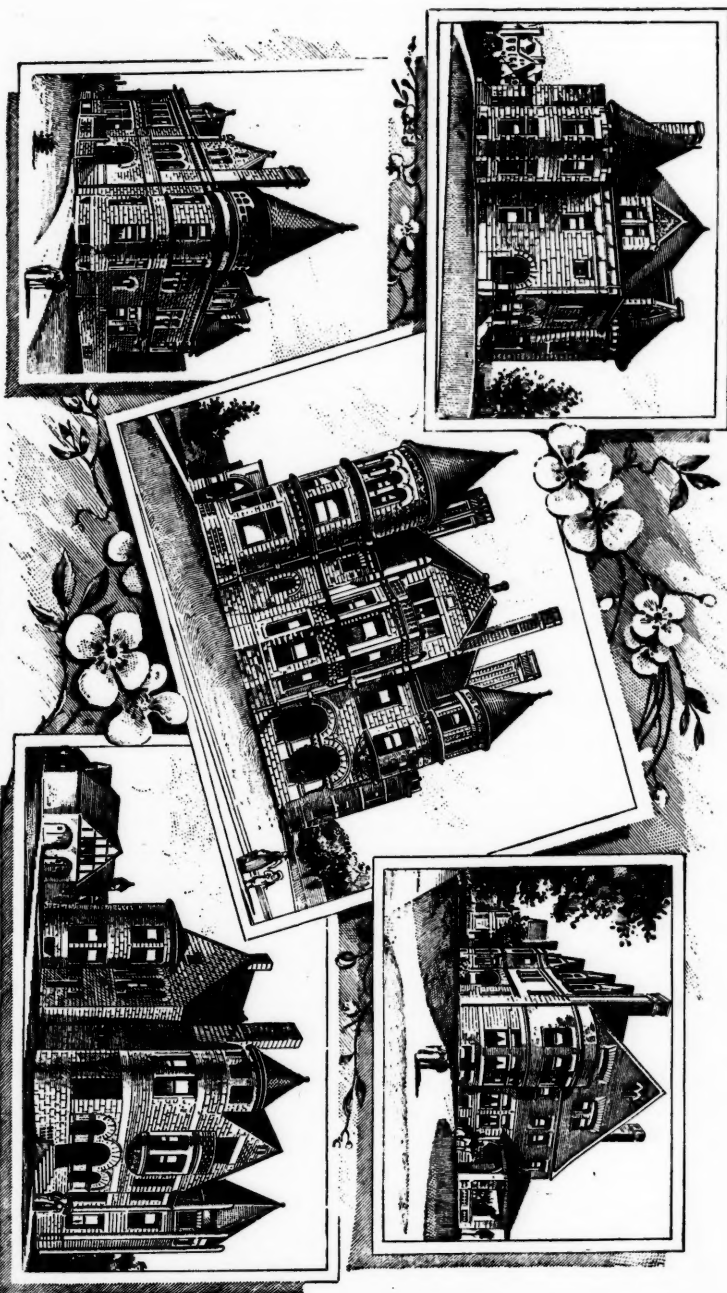
Another building which will cost about the same amount of money, but which is not in quite so advanced a stage of construction, is the new City Hall, which will probably be completed in the fall of this year.

It stands on an old pleasure-ground and park known as Washington Square, within two or three blocks of the old Union Dépôt, which has been useful if not ornamental for years, but which is about to be



NEW CITY HALL, ST. LOUIS.

relegated to freight traffic and other less high-toned purposes than fell to its lot while it was in its prime. It is difficult to estimate how many millions of visitors to the St. Louis Exposition and festivities have arrived at and departed from the old dépôt, but each of them



A GROUP OF NEW ST. LOUIS RESIDENCES.

will probably remember the small park with fountains in the centre which they passed in driving to their hotels.

This park is the home of the New City Hall, one of the best-planned municipal buildings in America; indeed, its fame while in actual course of construction is so great that a very large number of delegations from other cities have from time to time visited St. Louis to glean actual information concerning the new home for the city's governors. The building has a frontage of three hundred and eighty feet and a depth of about two hundred and twenty feet. It is, or will be, five stories high, with a fine bell-tower some two hundred feet above the sidewalks. The general style of architecture is of the Louis XIV. order, and the building is in appearance an enlargement on a very liberal scale of the town halls which the traveller through Northern France sees to-day in some of the more prosperous cities.

The basement and first story of the building are constructed of Missouri granite, the upper stories are of buff Roman brick with sandstone trimmings, and the roof is of black glazed Spanish tile. The interior courts are lined with white glazed brick, and the structure, which is absolutely fire-proof throughout, is being equipped with eight elevators so arranged as to be convenient to each of the numerous entrances. A portion of this handsome and massive building is under roof, and a few offices are already occupied by municipal departments. The site on which the old City Hall stands is about to be sold and the building torn down to make room for another lofty commercial structure. The hall is a substantial-looking building, and answered its purpose well for years, but neither in size nor in elegance is it up to the requirements of New St. Louis.

The same remark applies to another municipal institution,—the water-works. These rank among the very best in the West, and have for years been supplying pure Missouri River water. But the works have become too small to supply the needs of the people in the event of emergency, and, moreover, the city has encroached so rapidly on outlying territory that new works, farther removed from the crowded streets and manufactories, were determined upon some few years ago. These are now well-nigh completed, after an expenditure bordering upon eight millions.

Nothing really indicates in a more interesting manner the steady growth of St. Louis, and the absorption of the old by the new, than the experience of the city authorities in the provision of water for the inhabitants. The work has been one constant round of development and evolution. It is on record that the City Council of a Southern burg, as the result of a frantic effort to compromise and please all parties, deliberately came to the following unique if illogical conclusion: "*Resolved*, (1) That we build a new jail;

"(2) That the new jail be built out of the materials of the old jail; and

"(3) That the old jail be used until the new jail is finished."

The policy in St. Louis with regard to its water-works has been more business-like and practical than this, for, while the old works have performed their task in each instance until the completion of the new ones,

nothing but the newest and best material and machinery has been used in the latter. The water-works have been beating a graceful, though forced, retreat from the business section of St. Louis for generations. The first works on an extensive scale were but little more than a mile north of the court-house, and the action of the authorities of the day in going so far up the river was criticised with considerable vigor and assurance. The next move was about a mile farther north, and it was then supposed that the problem of the water-works location had been definitely settled. Again, however, the city overtook the works, and the splendid pumping-stations at Bissel's Point, close to where the Merchants' Bridge has since been erected, were constructed and equipped.



NEW HIGH SCHOOL, GRAND AVENUE, ST. LOUIS.

These new works did nobly, and for years they have been supplying the city with water of absolute purity and in apparently unlimited quantity. But when they were constructed New St. Louis had not reared its head above the traditions of the past, and the idea of a city with a population rapidly approaching a million was not dreamed of. About the year 1880 the engineers in charge of the works began to call attention to the danger of a water-famine in the event of the breakdown of a single engine, the great increase in consumption taxing the machinery to its fullest capacity; and as a result of these warnings legislation was obtained authorizing the construction of the magnificent water-works, settling-basins, and conduits at a point known as the Chain of Rocks, some twelve miles north of the centre of the city, and but a few miles south of the junction of the Missouri with the Mississippi River. It is a fact well known and often commented upon that the waters of these two mighty rivers are very slow in intermingling, and hence the St. Louis water-supply will be drawn entirely from the Missouri, whose water has been proved by analysis year after year, and indeed month after month, to be absolutely free from any matter injurious to health or in any degree objectionable.

Every visitor to St. Louis, or indeed to the West, should make a point of visiting these new works in person. They are now practically completed, and present a variety of engineering triumphs which it is impossible to describe adequately in a few lines. Suffice it to say that the capacity will be ample to supply the wants of over a million inhabitants, and that the water will be conveyed from enormous settling-tanks, through a conduit seven miles long, to the old water-works which have done such yeoman service for years, but which will no longer be used for the purpose for which they were designed. A special feature of the new works is an inlet tower built out in the river far enough from the shore to secure absolute purity of water; and indeed the plans and proportions of the new works are so elaborate that there exists an absolute certainty that no matter how rapidly the city may grow for the next ten years there will be an ample supply of good, wholesome, and clear water for all its inhabitants and their guests.

To imagine, however, that the water question has been settled for all time would be foolish, in view of the wholesale growth of New St. Louis, and already the question of tapping the Missouri River prior to its junction with the Mississippi, eighteen miles north of St. Louis, is being discussed as a live question.

The expression "wholesale growth" as applied to New St. Louis is in no sense an exaggerated one, for during the last three years one hundred miles of street frontage have been covered with new buildings in the city. These figures are not guessed at, but are taken carefully from returns filed in the office of the Building Commissioner, whose records show the number and foot frontage not only of every building authorized, but also of every building completed and occupied. Last year alone, five thousand four hundred and ninety-seven buildings were erected in St. Louis. The figures established a record, but those for 1891 and 1890 were also remarkable to a degree, the average number of buildings erected in each of those years being in excess of four thousand five hundred. There were thus fourteen thousand five hundred buildings actually erected in the city during the thirty-six months ending last Christmas, and if any justification were needed for the term "New St. Louis," these figures would more than give it. Placed side by side, the buildings erected last year alone would extend thirty-nine miles, and the buildings for the three years, similarly placed, would occupy every foot front on both sides of a street fifty miles long.

This building activity shows no sign of abating, and all through the past winter contractors and builders have been defying the elements and rearing massive structures in every direction. It is, of course, the quality as much as the quantity of new buildings that is an index of a city's prosperity and growth, and it is hence of special interest to note the character and value of the fourteen thousand buildings which have been completed in St. Louis in the brief space of three years. It is not even necessary to turn to the official records of cost to be convinced that the character of these structures is as significant as their number, for a complete transformation scene has been enacted on block after block in the down-town section, as well as in that portion of the city given over to residences. Jay Gould is credited with the statement

that in building it is advisable to make the number of stories as great as safety and convenience permit, on the unanswerable theory that ground costs money and air does not. He himself set a good example in St. Louis in this respect, and since then space has been encroached upon more and more, until now twelve-story buildings are not high enough to excite comment, and fourteen stories have begun to be regarded as the correct thing.

These lofty office buildings are as characteristic of New St. Louis as the four- and five-story buildings of half a generation ago were of the old city. The new buildings, with their rapid elevators and modern equipments, are a source of wonderment to country visitors, some of whom have a deep-rooted antipathy to these aids to locomotion in an upward direction.

"It's no use, a man must ride in one of them chutes now," explained a visitor whose attire and speech betrayed his connection with agriculture. "Ten years ago there wasn't a building in St. Louis a man couldn't walk all over and use the stairs, but it's no use thinking of doing that now. Time a man has climbed fourteen flights of stairs there's no breath left in him to ask his way round the passages, and all you can do is to let yourself be locked in and trust to luck and the boy in buttons to land you safe where you want to go, if so be you're lucky enough to make him understand where that is."

There is considerably more truth than poetry in this philosophy, for the elevator has long since become a necessity instead of a luxury down-town. In the year 1885 the Equitable Building, on the corner of Sixth and Locust Streets, was regarded as one of the finest office buildings in the city. It was six stories high, and the demand for office buildings in fire-proof structures was so enormous that the proprietors had the walls examined carefully and finally determined to add four stories more. The work was carried out successfully, and the



UNION TRUST BUILDING, ST. LOUIS.

building is still one of the most popular in the city, although it has been somewhat dwarfed in appearance by the erection of so many still loftier buildings close to it. Illustrations are given of a few of the most conspicuous of the new fire-proof "sky-scrapers," and it is only necessary to add that these are merely types of thirty other buildings of similar character which are either just completed or actually in course of erection. A better justification of the expression "wholesale growth" could scarcely be found, and it is doubtful if any city in the Union can duplicate this showing. At least twenty of the new buildings cost, or will cost, more than half a million each to erect, at least three will average more than a million and a half, and about five more will pass the million mark.

These figures, remarkable as they appear, were being discussed one day last month at an informal dinner at one of the local clubs, given to some of the many outside capitalists who visit St. Louis and invest their money freely in a city whose attainments and prospects convince them that a better field could not be found.

"The only question that arises in my mind," remarked an Eastern visitor, "is, what are you going to do with all these office buildings? You must be increasing the number of office rooms for rent twenty-five if not fifty per cent. per annum, and what I would like to know is, where are the new tenants to come from?"

"I can't tell you where they come from," was the reply of the real-estate man addressed, "but I can prove to you very easily that they do come. The moment the fact leaks out that a new fire-proof building is to be erected there is a demand for leases of the best offices, and more especially those on the ground-floor. In several instances leases have been signed before the first contract has been let, calling for sufficient rent in the aggregate to more than pay the interest on the entire cost of construction. When the building is on a corner the competition for the best ground-floor office is so great that it sometimes leads to hard feeling, and even with the up-stairs offices, numerous as they are becoming, the problem of renting them to good tenants is far easier than it was five or six years ago, when the number of rooms was comparatively small."

"That's easily enough accounted for," explained a manufacturer who was dining with the visitors. "The manufacturing interests of St. Louis ten years ago were insignificant compared with what they are now, and if we go on building factories and office buildings at the present rate of progress for the next ten years we shall find it practically impossible even then to keep up with the inevitable increased demand for business accommodations."

The capitalist did not say whether he was convinced or not, but before returning home the following evening he had invested a sum of money running into six figures in St. Louis realty, which he has since declined to dispose of at a profit of nearly twenty thousand dollars.

For every effect there must be a cause, and a careful survey of New St. Louis and its interests indicates very plainly that the cause of its magnificent progress is to be found in the growth of its manufactures and commerce. Hence it is strictly accurate to state that there is no

"boom" in St. Louis. Prices of real estate are increasing rapidly, but the increase is not the result of speculation. It is rather the legitimate outcome of a steady demand for investment purposes, and of a wise determination on the part of a large percentage of real-estate owners to hold on to the good things they have been fortunate enough to secure.

Continuing the same line of thought, the basis of the demand for St. Louis investments is the magnitude of its manufacturing interests, for the census of 1890, and still later returns which careful inquiry from impartial sources has more than verified, show that St. Louis is in every sense of the word the manufacturing centre of the great West and Southwest. The census for 1880 showed an annual



SECURITY BUILDING, ST. LOUIS.

manufacturing product for St. Louis of \$114,533,375; the census for 1890 showed a manufacturing product of just double that sum; and the returns for 1892, compiled with great care and with distinct leanings towards conservatism, show a total of \$270,000,000. In other words, the manufactures of the city have increased just one hundred and thirty-six per cent. in twelve years, and the word "impossible"

has been expunged from the dictionary of the local manufacturer and financier.

St. Louis is thoroughly cosmopolitan, and almost all European nations are well represented in it. But it is even more cosmopolitan in its manufactures than in the *personnel* of its inhabitants, and it is almost impossible to state in what line of manufacture the city most



WAINWRIGHT BUILDING, ST. LOUIS.

excels. It now manufactures more boots and shoes than any other city in the United States, and in addition it receives and distributes a larger number of these useful articles from the Eastern factories than any other town or even State. Last year alone it manufactured five million pair of shoes, and, great as was its output in this line, that in men's clothing was even greater.

To pass from the useful to the luxurious, the government returns show that St. Louis manufactured more tobacco last year than any other city in the Union, and that it really produced nearly one-fourth of the total tobacco output of the country. Its breweries have been subjects of comment for years, and larger establishments of this kind cannot be found on this side the Atlantic. Twelve million dollars' worth of agricultural implements and eight million dollars' worth of carriages

and vehicles were made in the city last year, while the sales of hardware approximated eighteen millions. About twenty million dollars were received for furniture, and considerably over twelve millions for drugs, while street-cars worth more than ten million dollars were manufactured and shipped out to all parts of the world. At the present time the largest single order ever given out by a railroad company for freight- and passenger-cars is being executed by a St. Louis establishment.

The transactions in what may be termed general merchandise were colossal last year, the receipts for groceries exceeding eighty-five million dollars, or ten millions more than in 1891, while forty millions were expended in the city on dry-goods and nearly five millions more on hats and caps. More than half the wooden-ware used in the United States is now made in St. Louis, and the manufactures of saddlery exceed three and a half millions a year. Altogether, nearly sixty-five million dollars were paid in wages to factory employees last year, and the number of factories and of employees has increased considerably during the first quarter of 1893.

If it be asked whether there is danger of New St.

Louis having to follow the example of Alexander the Great and weep because there are no more worlds for it to conquer, the answer must be that so far as its manufactures are concerned the city is but on the threshold of its greatness. Its location is such that every advance in wealth and population in the Southwest and South must inevitably be reflected upon its commerce, while there are few Western States which do not regard it as their legitimate manufacturing centre. Its Autumnal Festivities Association, besides spending half a million dollars in carnival and kindred attractions, maintains a Bureau of Information, which, besides fostering enterprise of every description, keeps a record of the references to the city in the press of the United States, and a



RIALTO BUILDING, ST. LOUIS.

perusal of the clippings shows that in more than half the States and Territories of the Union the pre-eminence of New St. Louis in all things manufacturing and commercial is cheerfully, nay, proudly, conceded.

Nor are the predictions of the city's future overdrawn or unduly optimistic. Of the eight hundred miles of territory between St. Louis and the Gulf of Mexico, the former is monarch of all it surveys, not one manufacturing city rearing its head to dispute its right. On the west there is little in the way of competition clear out to the Pacific coast, and both east and north nearly three hundred miles have to be traversed before a manufacturing city of any prominence is reached. It is usual in the East to speak of St. Louis as a "Western" city, but, as a matter of fact, St. Louis is much nearer the Atlantic than the Pacific seaboard. Too far north to be a Southern city, too far south to be a Northern one, too far east to be Western, and too far west to be Eastern, St. Louis is central in every sense of the word, and is uniquely situated as the distributing point for the grandest, most fertile, and most prosperous region of the New World.

Oklahoma is practically a commercial suburb of St. Louis, and this Territory has in three short years become thoroughly settled and distinctly progressive. The opening up of the remainder of the Indian Territory is but a question of time, and there is so much elbow-room in St. Louis territory generally that, no matter how rapidly the manufacturing output of the city increases, the demand for its products outgrows the supply. And everything combines to help the manufacturer. Coal is cheaper in St. Louis than in any other large city outside of Pennsylvania, and raw material of every description is obtainable close to the city's very gates. Over sixty thousand miles of railroad are tributary to St. Louis, increased terminal and transportation facilities are being provided in every direction, and the hand of fate seems to point with unwavering decision to New St. Louis as the coming metropolis of the mid-continent.

James Cox.

THE SOUL OF MAN.

SAY, in a hut of mean estate
A light just glimmers and then is gone,
Nature is seen to hesitate,—
Put forth and then retract her pawn ;

Say, in the alembic of an eye
Haughty is mixed with poor and low ;
Say, Truth herself is not so high
But Error laughs to see her so ;

Say, all that strength failed in its trust ;
Say, all that wit crept but a span ;
Say, 'tis a drop spilled in the dust,—
And then say *brother*—then say *man* !

Dora Read Goodale.

KÜHNE BEVERIDGE.

KÜHNE BEVERIDGE at the age of seventeen not only has the distinction of being the most talked-of woman sculptor of the day, but of her an eminent sculptor has said that in all the essentials of her art she is more largely endowed than any woman who has ever lived.

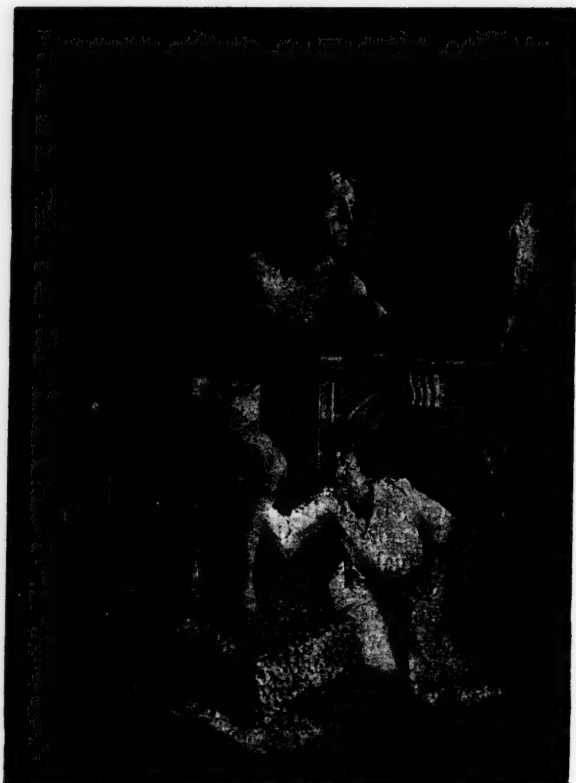
The essential quality of sculpture—which is so simple an art, so limited in its diversity of expression—is gravity, weight. A painting may be bad in color, in composition, even in drawing, but may still have some quality of atmosphere, of tone, which will be a source of pleasure, the picture itself always capable of improvement. Thus, painting has a wider range of expression than sculpture, and women, for this reason, have achieved more in the hospitable art and less in the sterner. For this quality of gravity is the one in which all women, according to the best authorities, have fallen short. No woman, in fact, up to this time has done anything in sculpture which demands or commands more than ephemeral notice. In the case of Miss Beveridge this quality, according to these same authorities, is so noticeable that the crudest of her work compels the respect alike of men grown gray and famous in the art and of those who are ignorant of technique, but responsive to power in any form.

This quality is exemplified in all that she has done,—in the busts of Cleveland, Stevenson, Jefferson, W. G. Harrison, Senator Fair, George Bromley, and John Drew,—noticeably in the last-named. Here is the portrait of a serious capable man,—of an actor whose weight of personality would compel and hold the attention of any audience. And in it are suggestions of reach, of high possibilities that may yet prove prophetic. Two other of Miss Beveridge's essentials, striking in any woman, in a young girl more particularly, are the instinctive recognition of the ideal, of the spiritual possibilities in her model, and the power of giving them expression.

The most remarkable piece of work which Miss Beveridge has yet done is her *Sprinter*,—of which but a poor idea is given in the accompanying cut, so badly foreshortened is the subject. Here is the nude figure of a man seven feet high, modelled with anatomical exactness, so instinct with life that the very clay seems no longer a fit synonyme for death, yet striking the most unlessoned beholder with its dignity, its power, and the "gravity" which, following some eccentric deflection, has found its way into the dreamy brain and delicate fingers of a girl. The figure is that of the typical athlete, modelled from two representative sprinters; but the face is that of the highest type of man which civilization has yet developed: a face refined, intellectual, passionate, determined, even a little cruel, and with just a hint of weakness. That at her age Miss Beveridge should be capable of conceiving such an ideal, of grasping and expressing the strange forces which go to make the man of the higher civilization, is but another instance of the intuitive faculty of her mind.

It may be added that this Sprinter was modelled under every circumstance which is discouraging to the plastic art. In a cold room, with no north light, no turning-table, no one even to help her mix her clay, Miss Beveridge built up this large and difficult piece of work from toe to crown. When it was finished she went to bed, dangerously ill, and the figure was half ruined in the casting. She has been obliged to remodel half of it.

"In short," said a sculptor the other day, "we have in this young girl a personality of gravity, of refinement, of volume, and of a truth-



feeling quality, which no one of her sex hitherto has turned into the art of sculpture. With time, and the experience and enlargement that come with time, we may predict almost anything of her, place no limitations on our hopes of her future, of what may be achieved by this remarkably endowed personality; and personality, after all, is genius."

The Beveridge family is a very old one, wealthy and prominent. The subject of this sketch was born in the Executive Mansion at Springfield, Illinois, while her grandfather, John L. Beveridge, was

governor of the State. During her childhood she was taken abroad and educated in three languages, residing most of the time in Dresden. She grew up in an atmosphere of art and of the best society in Europe. In addition to a great deal of hard studying, she learned to play the violin, and read more than the frivolous woman reads in a lifetime. At present she is living in New York with her mother, the Baroness von Wrede. She seems never to have had any youth or to have wanted any, but has lived at a mental strain in an ideal world, independent of her fellows, and, from the time she was old enough to reason, acknowledging no master-spirit but ambition. On the other hand, she is as sensible as the most prosaic, and utterly without affectation or conceit. It may also be mentioned here that she possesses something more than talent for the stage, and that she is a tall, graceful girl, with a face which under less lovely coloring would be almost too strong for beauty. But of her beauty there has been no dispute, and her expression is one of marked spirituality.

Altogether, one can say, without enthusiasm and with cold regard for truth, that in Kühne Beveridge we have one of the most extraordinarily endowed girls that America has yet produced. Only a few years of hard study are required to place her unassailably in the front rank of the world's great women.

Gertrude Atherton.

IN QUIET BAYS.

IN quiet bays by storms unspent
I moor my boat with calm content.

I sought of yore the deep, wide sea :
The tempest set my spirit free ;

I loved to match my puny power
With Nature in her stormiest hour.

But now I bring my little boat
In quiet bays, to drift and float

Idly upon the idle tide :
The sea for me is all too wide :

I seek no more my spirit's mate,
The awful, wind-swept sea of fate.

Charlotte Pendleton.

COLONEL POPE AND GOOD ROADS.

THE agitation for good roads has not abated, but grows apace and gathers force as it increases. It has passed the stage of the county convention and cross-road conference, and has reached the legislative chambers of the States and the general government. This stage has been brought about, however, largely through the instrumentalities of the press: secular, religious, technical, urban and rural, daily and periodical, all have conspired to maintain the interest in the economics of and necessity for better roads. The inspiration of the writers has been an intelligent comprehension of the enormous waste which is entailed by a mud embargo and the general constriction on all lines of travel due to the inability to haul freight over country roads in wet seasons. To remove this waste economists have entered upon a crusade of education which they are determined to maintain until those most interested shall realize the absolute necessity for better highways and shall cease to believe that every attempt made to improve the roads is an effort to rob the farmer of his property and rights that the rich may enjoy a drive in the country or secure possession of a coveted retreat from the turmoil of the city. The recent action of a farmers' convention in opposing road legislation in Pennsylvania reveals a lamentable ignorance of the purposes of a road, and a suspicion based upon demagogism which would forever bar any progress in this direction.

Almost every State in the Union is now moving to secure revised laws and better roads, and in each may be found a long list of distinguished and public-spirited men who, at great personal sacrifice, have given much time to this educational measure. Foremost among these in the East may be mentioned Colonel Albert A. Pope, of Boston, Massachusetts, who is indefatigable in his efforts to secure results in every possible way and by the most impressive and practicable methods,—viz., object-lessons. To this end he has not only endowed a chair at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology with special reference to instruction in all matters pertaining to roads, but he has delivered numerous lectures, published many speeches, distributed circulars, petitions, and memorials, all bearing upon the question of the establishment of a better condition of our public ways. One of his latest papers is an appeal to editors and publishers urging them to sustain the movement and to correct the erroneous impression which seems to prevail that it is intended or desired to have the national government interfere in any way with the sovereign rights of the several States, by assuming to build national roads. Such is not his purpose, which is distinctly stated to be the establishment of a bureau of roads for educational purposes,—to collect statistics and to disseminate information about roads to the general public, somewhat in the manner of the recent consular reports on Roads and Streets of foreign countries, but to have it worked up by specialists and put in such form as to be of much greater practical utility. There is no more fear that such a bureau would trench upon the rights of States than that the Bureau of Agriculture would undertake the province of farming. But we would go even further, and believe that there should be not only a bureau of roads, but also a department of public works, to include within its jurisdiction all the ways of communication by land and water, domestic and foreign. The collection of statistics concerning our railways and water-ways, commerce and

navigation, rivers and harbors, and even the construction of the improvements in this latter sphere, might very properly be assigned to such a civil department.

The success of all popular movements is undoubtedly dependent upon the amount of interest which the individual not only feels, but on the energy which he is willing to exert upon those who have been elected to execute such measures. Hence it is that stress is laid upon the importance of individual and personal appeals to legislators by petition, by private letter, by interviews, and in every other legitimate way, to impress upon them the great need and desirability of reform or of revision in our road laws, that we may be enabled to secure better results, as it is evident that our present laws do not give us good roads, and that no improvement can be expected until the present system of working out the taxes be abolished for one that will give intelligent and skilful supervision and which will convert the present narrow-tired road-destroyers into broad-gauge road-preservers.

Colonel Pope's petitions should receive the immediate and personal attention of every one interested in good roads.

L. M. Haupt.

MEN OF THE DAY.

WILLIAM MORRIS, the poet, is a short-set, broad-shouldered man of robust build, with keen lustrous eyes, a curly mane of tangled gray hair, and a full flowing beard. He waxes his moustache, and wears spectacles. He habitually affects the roughest apparel, his general get-up being decidedly nautical. His friends declare that nothing pleases him so much as to be mistaken for a sailor. Not very long since, while he was sauntering through one of the crooked river-side streets in the old part of London, he was overhauled by a seafaring man. "Avast there!" cried the stranger: "don't I know you? Weren't you once mate of the brig Sea Swallow?" To be taken for a sailor was delightful, but to be mistaken for the mate of a ship with so poetic a name was simply glorious. "Yes, I am he," replied Morris; and, locking arms with the stranger, he piloted him to the nearest public house and filled him with meat and drink. The poet is now eight-and-fifty, and is a graduate of Oxford. He early turned his attention to the study of architecture, and in 1868 together with Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Burne Jones endeavored to set on foot a movement for elevating the artistic taste of the public by starting an "art fabrics" concern for the manufacture of wall-paper, stained glass, tiles, and other household decorations. Though undertaken as an artistic venture rather than as a business speculation, the concern has proved extremely successful. His leisure moments are devoted to the composition of poetry. "The Earthly Paradise," which is perhaps his best-known work, appeared just a quarter of a century ago. He has recently translated the *Odyssey* of Homer and rendered into English verse a number of Icelandic legends. He declares that hereafter he intends to do his own printing, and announces that his forthcoming volume will be issued from the press he has established in a cottage near his house. He is quite an enthusiastic antiquarian, and, as is well known, has long been one of the leaders of the socialist movement in England. His wife, who is said to be a singularly beautiful woman, lives a remarkably secluded life, hardly any of the poet's closest intimates having ever seen her.

Secretary of War Lamont, familiarly known as "Dan," is a short-necked, thick-set, semi-bald-headed man of middling height, with a broad shrewd face adorned by a stubborn reddish moustache, and is rising one-and-forty. He began life as a clerk in his father's cross-roads store at McGrawville, New York. He attended the village school, where he was fitted for the Central Academy, and after finishing his academic course entered Union College. He took to politics as a duck does to water, being appointed one of the clerks of the Assembly at the age of nineteen. This was in 1871. In the following year he was sent as a delegate to the State Convention at Rochester, where he attracted the attention of Samuel J. Tilden, who was ever after a warm personal and political friend. He next ran for county clerk, and then for the Assembly, but was defeated in each case by a narrow majority. He was subsequently appointed chief clerk of the State Department, and was secretary of the State Committee during the campaign of 1875. Then he drifted into journalism, and, through the good offices of Dan Manning, afterwards Secretary of the Treasury, obtained a position on the staff of the *Albany Argus*, of which in the fulness of time he became managing editor. He was appointed private secretary to Mr. Cleveland when the latter was elected governor, and subsequently accompanied the President to Washington in that capacity. He soon became enormously popular at the national capital with everybody in general, and with the newspaper correspondents in particular. After General Harrison's inauguration he settled in New York, and became connected with the surface railroad and other projects of William C. Whitney, and as a result he has waxed exceedingly rich and broken down his health. He neither smokes nor drinks, but he reads the papers as religiously as Senator Hill, and he can tell a story without missing the point. It is pretty generally conceded that he will be the "power behind the throne" during the present administration.

Archbishop Satolli, the "American Pope," as he has now come to be called, is a lean-built, firm-featured man, of ascetic manner, with a bald high forehead and deep-set penetrating eyes, and in general appearance is a typical Italian cleric. He is a special friend and *protégé* of Leo XIII., who calls him "one of his boys," although he is well over fifty years of age. He is a native of Perugia, the see over which Pope Leo presided for thirty-one years before his accession to the Papacy, and was for some time Professor of Dogmatic Theology in the Propaganda. In 1888 he was created Archbishop of Lepanto; but, this being only a titular diocese, he served as President of the Academy of Noble Ecclesiastics in Rome. He is a man of ripe monastic scholarship, and is esteemed one of the leading masters in that school of philosophy. He was sent to the United States to represent the Pope at the dedication of the World's Fair, and also incidentally for the purpose of investigating the controversies arising out of the school question and to straighten out some of the tangles of policy and discipline that had been obtruding themselves into public notice. His subsequent appointment as permanent Apostolic Delegate was hailed with mingled feelings of delight and disapproval in Catholic ecclesiastical circles. He is generally recognized as a level-headed, broad-minded, up-to-date prelate; but, although he cannot speak a word of English, he manipulates the type-writer like a professional.

M. Crofton.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH.

Outlines of Forestry; or, The Elementary Principles underlying the Science of Forestry.
By Edwin J. Houston, A.M.

Weather-prophecies are like the cure-alls of the quack: they serve us very well in our ignorance of the truth, but, having the truth at hand, we are deeply culpable if we persist in believing the predictions of a prophet who builds on chance. In the vital subject of the weather, which supplies all the world above brute creation with a common ground of intercourse, but which is understood even in its

most remote phases only by the scientific investigator, we are almost as untutored as the superstitious barbarian. That to-day is fair and to-morrow will be cloudy or rainy is told us with a show of confidence by the government officials, who are as often wrong as right; but those who seek for truth are conscious that they base their observations upon scientific data, and respect them accordingly. This, too, is the source of our respect for the very able treatise entitled "Outlines of Forestry," which has been written by Edwin J. Houston, A.M., of the Philadelphia Central High School, and just published in a substantial volume of two hundred and fifty-odd pages by the J. B. Lippincott Co. In it the subject of forestry as it respects climate is taken up among its other characteristics, and we venture to think that no reader who goes to the book intelligently for the last scientific thought on this or indeed any other allied subject will come away uninformed. The laws of storms, which, in our lack of knowledge, we too often look upon as lawless forces, are made clear as they relate to the destruction of the trees; and drainage, rain, and the purification of the atmosphere are all shown to be dependent upon the forests so wantonly cut down. But besides this important feature of the volume it possesses the qualities of a series of primers on forestry which can be used in schools, where, indeed, the wholesome ideas they inculcate and develop should most thoroughly be taught to the coming generation. The book contains, besides, appropriate extracts taken from standard authors, and, at the end, a Primer of Primers which provides assistance in remembering the principles discussed in each department. A most useful list of trees suitable for planting in different sections of this country has been gathered from authorities who represent the respective sections, and will be of untold help to those who have this most urgent of current needs at heart. On the whole, no more timely volume could possibly have been issued than *Outlines of Forestry*, and it is certain to do valuable work in saving and in restoring our trees, and hence our landscape.

Pumping Machinery. A Practical Hand-Book. By William M. Barr.

Books upon the special subject treated by Mr. William M. Barr in his exhaustive volume entitled *Pumping Machinery*, which has just issued from the Lippincott press, have been of rare growth, because, as is often the case in the handicrafts and mechanical professions, tradition has taken the place of written records. Hitherto the apprentice has learned his art from the master's experience, without book or lecture. This is the older order, which we of to-day are supplanting with more systematic methods, careful that nothing shall be slighted and nothing lost; and it is in fulfilment of such

modern ideas that Mr. Barr brings forward a book which preserves in substantial form all that is at the present time known upon his chosen subject.

But it is seldom that an early adventurer in a new field appears so well equipped as does this practical engineer, who is at the same time an excellent writer of direct English prose. Mr. Barr has sorely felt the need, he tells us, of just such a manual as this he has produced, and for years he has been himself using much of the material now incorporated in its pages. This renders his data of invaluable service to engineers, architects, contractors, and plumbers, who, having no large practical knowledge of the construction of pumps, yet must recommend and use pumping machinery in their work. Here, then, is an authoritative treatise, perhaps the most complete in existence, which will supply just the needed information to this class of craftsmen. Mr. Barr's use of the official reports of the Duty-Trial Committee of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, of which body he is a member, his employment of the specifications of the Underwriters' pump, and the judicious selection and arrangement of his contents, together with the two hundred and sixty admirable engravings scattered through the leaves, render this one of the most important volumes ever put forth from a house long famous for its solid works in the arts and sciences.

Was He the Other?
By Isabel Fitzroy.

There is, to the present reviewer, always an especial charm in a novel which knows how to keep its secrets. To guess in the first half-dozen chapters what will be painfully elaborated in the last half-dozen is an anticipation of weariness. If fiction is meant to amuse it must also surprise, and the premature discovery of its climax leaves it as inane as the man or woman the heart of whose mystery we pluck out in the first encounter. It is the particular excellence of *Was He the Other?* that the reader's mind is kept in doubt of its solution until the very last pages, and that when the explanation of the plot actually comes it is so plausible that nothing of the force of the climax is lost. Miss Fraser, a Girton girl on her journey up to London to visit her fashionable aunt Bessie, finds herself alone in a railroad compartment with a dark-skinned man who opens a conversation with her and finally attempts to caress her. She naturally grows alarmed, insists on the man's withdrawal from the coach, and sees nothing more of him until she finds him her *vis-à-vis* at Lady Mountfield's dinner. She cannot determine whether his want of embarrassment is due to forgetfulness or effrontery, and this problem remains unsolved through all their frequent intercourse of the London season. At last she discovers that Leonard Massingham has a double, and it is to the development of this interesting fact that the story devotes itself.

In *Was He the Other?* Isabel Fitzroy has written an intensely interesting book, which needs only a firmer artistic touch to render it a great novel. It is the latest issue in the Lippincott Select Series of fiction.

CURRENT NOTES.

QUESTIONS are frequently asked: Why do not other manufacturers besides the Royal Baking Powder Company also put up pure baking powders, free from lime, alum, and other adulterants? Is it a fact that the Royal is the only pure and wholesome baking powder made?

An inquiry develops some matters that will be found of interest to house-keepers generally.

There are three classes of these articles,—viz., the cream-of-tartar powders, the phosphate powders, and the alum powders.

The alum powders are classed by health officers as adulterants, inasmuch as their ingredients are condemned for all food purposes and are forbidden in many localities. They are concededly unwholesome, and are so denominated by all physicians.

The phosphate powders contain sulphuric acid and from eight to twelve per cent. of lime, impurities which are inseparable from the ingredients used in them. The continuous ingestion of acid phosphate, regardless of the condition of the system, as must occur where this class of baking powder is used, is liable to result in serious physical derangements, and is condemned by physicians generally.

The cream-of-tartar baking powders, to which class the Royal belongs, to be pure must be made from absolutely pure materials. The ordinary cream of tartar of the market contains lime. The Royal Baking Powder is made from cream of tartar specially refined and prepared for its use by patent processes by which the lime is totally eliminated. There is no other process by which cream of tartar can be freed from lime—made one hundred per cent. pure—in quantities practical for commercial purposes. Other baking-powder makers, not being able to obtain these chemically-pure goods (which are used exclusively in the Royal), are dependent upon the cream of tartar of the market, refined by the old-fashioned methods, by which it is impossible to remove the lime and other impurities.

These are the reasons why the Royal is pure, while other baking powders contain lime, alum, or other impurities.

This absolute purity not only renders the baking powder more perfectly wholesome, but the freedom from all extraneous substances makes it of higher leavening strength and effectiveness.

A SOURCE OF TROUBLE.—The elevated stations (says the *New York Times*) are a constant source of turning about to absent-minded folk. Those at crowded thoroughfares, where there are stairs not only on both sides of the avenue but also of the cross-street, prove particularly confusing to "transients." The other day a young woman, not often in New York, stopped at one of these to ask the guard a question. "You're on the up-town track," he answered; "go down-stairs and cross the street." Down-stairs she went, crossed Twenty-Third Street, and appeared again. "I told you," repeated the man, on seeing her, "to go down and cross the street." Thoroughly bewildered, she went down, re-crossed, and once more presented herself before the same guard. "What ails you?" he cried; "I said go down and cross the street." Down she crept, abashed, crossed the street, and climbed the stairs for the fourth time. As she reached the top, she peered cautiously over. There stood that man. She gathered up her skirts, and, turning on tiptoe, raced down again at the top of her speed. A little reflection on the curb-stone sent her, finally, rejoicing across the avenue to the other track.

NAPOLEON ON THE WAY TO ELBA.—The wind was now increasing to a gale. He asked me, laughing, if there was any danger, which was evidently meant to annoy Baron Koller, who was near him, and who had no great faith in the safety of ships, and whom he constantly joked on his bad sailorship, as the baron suffered dreadfully from sea-sickness. He made some observations to me as to our men's allowance of provisions, and seemed surprised that they had cocoa and sugar, and asked how long they had had that indulgence. . . .

This evening a small Genoese trading-vessel passed near us. I ordered her to be examined, and, as Napoleon was anxious to know the news, I desired the captain to be sent on board. Napoleon was on the quarter-deck; he wore a great-coat and round hat. As he expressed a wish to question the captain, I sent him to the Emperor on the after part of the quarter-deck, and afterwards ordered him down to my cabin. "Your captain," said he, "is the most extraordinary man I ever met; he put all sorts of questions to me, and, without giving me time to reply, repeated the same questions to me rapidly a second time." When I told him to whom he had been speaking, he appeared all astonishment, and instantly ran on deck, hoping to see him again; but Napoleon, to his great disappointment, had already gone below. When I told Napoleon the man had remarked the rapidity with which he put questions to him twice over, he said it was the only way to get at the truth from such fellows.

One morning when Napoleon was on deck, I ordered the ship to be tacked, and we stood toward the Ligurian coast. The weather was very clear as we approached the land. We had a fine view of the Alps. He leaned on my arm and gazed at them with great earnestness for nearly half an hour; his eye appeared quite fixed. I remarked that he had passed those mountains on a former occasion under very different circumstances. He merely said that it was very true.—*The Century*.

NO WONDER.—Mr. Scraper.—"This razor is awfully blunt."

Mrs. Scraper.—"So I thought when I was cutting some cardboard with it yesterday."

"You can't do that again," said Pat when the Indian scalped him.—*Truth*.



SEED-TIME

Anticipates harvest. The seed-time of disease is when the system is run down and exhausted with anxiety, overwork, or excess. For such a condition, manifesting itself in That Tired Feeling, the best remedy is **Ayer's Sarsaparilla**. In its purification of the blood, it acts upon every vital function, strengthening those which are weak, stimulating those which are sluggish, and upbuilding those which are impaired. An obedience to the laws of hygiene and the use of **Ayer's Sarsaparilla** will enable the most delicate man or sickly woman to pass in ease and safety from the icy atmosphere of February to the warm, moist days of April and May. Take nothing that is claimed as a substitute. Insist on having

Ayer's Sarsaparilla

Prepared by Dr. J. C. Ayer & Co., Lowell, Mass.

Cures Others, Will Cure You

Colds, Coughs, Croup,

Sore throat, and Bronchitis are liable to invade the household at any hour of the day or night. They often come when least expected. Before the doctor can reach you, the consequences may be serious or even fatal; but, with **Ayer's Cherry Pectoral** in the house, you are assured of speedy relief. It soothes the inflamed membrane, loosens the phlegm, stops coughing, and induces repose. Every household, in which there are young children, should be supplied with

Ayer's Cherry Pectoral

Prepared by Dr. J. C. Ayer & Co., Lowell, Mass.

Prompt to Act, Sure to Cure

NOTHING HIDDEN.—"In China a 'private house' is unknown. Any one can go anywhere, and if there is the least provocation he will do so." So says the Rev. A. H. Smith, after many years of missionary service in that country. To shut the door is a bad sign. "What is going on within, that he dare not admit his fellow-townsmen?" people are likely to say. There are no newspapers, no objects of general and human interest to attract attention, and, as men and women must be interested in something, it is natural that they should be fond of neighborly gossip. From Mr. Smith's account of the matter, it is plain how very little Chinese and Yankees have in common.

Every Chinese has relatives beyond all count or remembrance. His wife has as many more. His married children add to the ever-widening circle. By the time he is sixty years of age, a man is related to hundreds upon hundreds of individuals, each of whom is entirely conscious of the relationship and does not forget or ignore it.

Not only do all the members of this army of relatives feel themselves entitled to know all the details of one's affairs, but the relatives of the relatives—a swarm branching into infinity—will perhaps do the same. If the man is rich, or a magistrate, they certainly will do it.

One cannot make a business trip to sell watermelons, to buy mules, to collect a debt, of which every one will not speedily know all that is to be known. Chinese memories are treasure-houses of everything relative to cash and to dates.

How much land each man owns, when it was acquired, when pawned, and when redeemed, how much was expended at the funeral of his mother and at the wedding of his son, how the daughter-in-law is liked at the village into which she has married, the amount of her dowry, what bargain was made with the firm that let the bridal chair, all these items and a thousand more everybody knows and never forgets.

Though two men at a fair may do their bargaining with their fingers concealed in their capacious sleeves, it will go hard if the neighbors do not discover the terms at last.

There are no secrets in China. Everybody crowds in everywhere,—if not in sight, then "behind the arras." Every one reads every despatch he can get at. He reads "private" letters in the same way.

"What!" he exclaims, "not let me see?"

No wonder the Chinese have an adage, "If you would not have it known that you do it, do not do it."

RESPECT FOR THE FEELINGS.—A marked trait in Owens's nature was consideration for the feelings of his inferiors. I remember one day when he had been in the city since early morn; as he drove up to the house one of the farmhands met him when he alighted from the carriage, and said, "Oh, Mr. Owens, I'm thankful you're gotten back. Please come to see my boy Dave, and tell me what to do for him. He has had a fall, and I'm feared his leg is interrogated. I've rubbed it with merriment, but it's no good: he cries all the time." Some one standing by broke into laughter at these malapropisms. Mr. Owens rebuked this sharply, adding, "There's nothing amusing in a man's distress. Go for a doctor, instead of grinning over suffering." Then, turning to the anxious father, he said, "Come, we will go to Dave and stay with him till the doctor arrives."—*Memoirs of John E. Owens.*

POND'S EXTRACT

Sore Throat,
Lameness,
Influenza,
Wounds,
Piles,
Earache,
Chilblains,
Sore Eyes,
Inflammations,

WILL CURE



FAC-SIMILE OF
BOTTLE WITH
BUFF WRAPPER.

Hoarseness,
Frost Bites,
Soreness,
Catarrh,
Burns,
Bruises,
Sore Feet,
Face Ache,
Hemorrhages.

AVOID IMITATIONS.

ACCEPT NO SUBSTITUTE.

POND'S EXTRACT CO., 76 Fifth Avenue, New York

"DEATH—sudden death—is always for some one else, not for me," you think. It is like that place or state of future punishment, reserved for others, never for ourselves.

If death is to come to us at all, and we are reluctant to realize that it surely will, it is far distant; its approach will be duly heralded; we think of it as a merchant thought of a creditor whose note he held, solacing himself with the idea that "no man failed in thirty days."

It does come—often without warning.

Those concerned in our spiritual future admonish and instruct and minister hopefulness and comfort. It may be that in eternity we may somehow **forgive ourselves** for a neglect of duty here; but what happiness can we have in knowing the suffering and misery which our widows and children endure might all have been averted by a little forethought and precaution?

Among the prudent, wise, and truly loving, that precaution takes the form of life insurance. It need not involve great sacrifice, nor any to rightly constituted minds, for **compensation goes with it**. Learn what you may do. No obligation imposed.

Address the

PENN MUTUAL LIFE,

921-3-5 Chestnut Street,
Philadelphia, Pa.

THE TOMB OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT.—A vexed question and a disputed mystery for ages the burial-place of Alexander has undoubtedly been. The common belief of many centuries has, indeed, placed his sepulchre at Alexandria; but every effort to discover it there has been ineffectual. Nor does there appear to have been any well-grounded cause why Alexandria should have been thought to contain the site of the conqueror's tomb. There is absolutely no direct testimony upon the point. Two contemporaneous histories of Alexander's life are known to have been written, the one by Ptolemæus Lagides, and the other by Aristobulus Cassandrensis. Both these writers were officers in Alexander's army, yet neither of them says anything about his burial. The former, known also as Ptolemy Soter, gained possession of Egypt on the division of the Macedonian Empire after the death of Alexander and became the founder of the celebrated dynasty of the Ptolemies. It is he who has been commonly supposed to have conveyed the remains of Alexander to Egypt for interment. If this had been the case, we should naturally expect him to have mentioned the event, and his silence on the point is consequently a strong argument against the Alexandrian theory. It is true that only fragmentary portions of his writings are extant; but Arrian, who wrote an exhaustive life of Alexander, and who was fully acquainted with the whole of Ptolemy's work, makes no allusion to him as an authority respecting the tomb of his hero. Aristobulus Cassandrensis is equally silent; nor from any other of the ancient writers who allude to Alexander can we glean a word of real information on the subject.—*Rev. Haskett Smith, in Macmillan's Magazine.*

A DIFFICULT FEAT.—In the old days in Western Pennsylvania, when the people had little money to pay for teachers, says the *Youth's Companion*, and could spare their boys but little time from the work of the field, school "kept" almost incessantly during the few weeks when it was in session, with no Saturday holidays and very brief recesses.

At one little school-house among the mountains an old-fashioned Irish school-master was once employed who kept his boys grinding steadily at their tasks, but gave them permission to nibble from their lunch-baskets sometimes as they worked.

One day, while the master was instructing a class in the rule of three, he noticed that one of his pupils was paying more attention to a piece of apple pie than to the lesson.

"Arrah, there," said the master, "Jack Bales, be listenin' to the lisson, will ye?"

"I'm listening, sir," said the boy.

"Listenin', is it?" exclaimed the master; "then it's listenin' wid one ear ye are, an' atin' poi wid the other!"

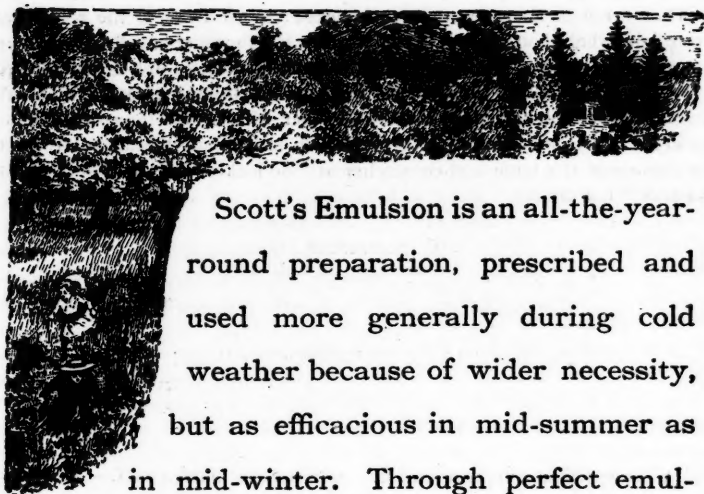
SPEAKING of actors, Mr. Osbourne tells me that when quite young he went through the country with a barn-storming company that was giving "Hamlet." The performance was simply vile, and one night all the audience commenced to hiss, except one.

At last the man next to him said,—

"Why don't you hiss this punk show?"

"It wouldn't hardly be fair," he said, "since I came in on a pass. But if they don't improve, damned if I don't go out and buy a ticket and join you."—

Le Perdrix, in The Wasp.



Scott's Emulsion is an all-the-year-round preparation, prescribed and used more generally during cold weather because of wider necessity, but as efficacious in mid-summer as in mid-winter. Through perfect emulsification the oil remains sweet, and being partially digested by chemical process is readily assimilated. It is pleasant to take, and can be used when other heavy foods pall upon taste. This is not true of plain cod liver oil, but in a variety of ways Scott's Emulsion is an improvement upon plain oil.

SCOTT'S EMULSION

of pure Norwegian Cod Liver Oil with Hypophosphites of Lime and Soda is a preventive as well as a curative. It prevents the development of Consumption, Scrofula and other hereditary diseases by building up healthy flesh. It overcomes fixed disease by driving out poor blood and destroying imperfect tissue.

Prepared by SCOTT & BOWNE, Chemists, New York. Sold by All Druggists—\$1.00.

A. H. JAPP, LL.D., F.R.S.E., tells in *Cassell's Family Magazine* this anecdote of Dean Stanley's parrot:

One day Polly managed to open her cage and get away, to the consternation of the whole household. After a great search, some one found Polly in the garden on the top of an apple-tree. The welcome news was communicated to the dean. With the whole of the inmates, he rushed out at once, accompanied by Dr. Vaughan, who, with some other friends, was then on a visit to the dean. Polly was found swinging herself on a topmost branch, but when she discovered the large audience below her she looked gravely down at them, and said, "Let us pray."

HAPPINESS.

Like some great golden butterfly 'neath summer skies,
Now poised, now hovering o'er the rose new-born,
Which, as I clasp it, up and onward flies,
Far from the hand left bleeding by a thorn!

DOROTHEA LUMMIS, in
Kate Field's Washington.

A NEW PAROQUET DISCOVERED IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA.—On returning to camp we sat down to a feast of fish that our natives had in the mean time caught in the pool, which they did with the aid of their spears.

At the furthest point reached by our expedition the outlook as far as the eye could reach was sand and salt plains sparsely covered with the spinifex.

There was abundant evidence that the water does occasionally descend on these arid tracts, but beyond a few tiny paroquets, alighting at our furthest well, which had evidently flown towards us from a great distance (they were so exhausted as to be unable to get out of our way, one of the poor creatures actually allowing me to gently bowl it over with my whip), sign of life, other than insect life, there was absolutely none. The specimen I secured was a singularly beautiful one. The length from the tip of the bill to the extremity of the tail was six and a quarter inches. The head was of a brilliant cobalt-blue, which blended into softer tints down the back; the wing covered by bright blue quill feathers, the breast emerald-green upon a ground-work of orange-yellow, the belly feathers also yellow, and tail feathers flaming yellow, edged with emerald-green. Noticing that after slaking their thirst these tiny birds began to feed upon the spinifex seed, and as they are new to science, I propose to name them after that plant.—*Albert F. Calvert, M.E., in The English Illustrated Magazine.*

DID AS HE WAS TOLD.—"A bell-boy has been found," says an exchange, "who does not believe in going beyond his literal instructions.

"A guest rushed to the cashier's desk. He had just ten minutes in which to pay his bill, reach the dépôt, and board his train.

"Great Scott!" he exclaimed, "I've forgotten something. Here, boy, run up to my room, B 48, and see if I have left my tooth-brush and sponge. Hurry! I've only five minutes."

"The boy hurried. He returned in four minutes, out of breath.

"Yes, sir," he panted, "you left them there."

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BITS OF NEWS.—An English teacher, Miss A. C. Graham, has taken a prize offered by the *University Correspondent* for the best collection of pupils' blunders. She vouches for them all as literal copies of the originals, and explains that she was led to set about their collection by reading one day the surprising statement that "Iliad and Odessae translated Euripides." *The Youth's Companion* gives a few of the choicest gems of her collection, in some of which the outcropping of the English idea that all history converges on the British Isles is almost startling:

Esau was a man who wrote fables and who sold the copyright to a publisher for a bottle of potash.

The Jews believed in the synagogue and had their Sunday on a Saturday, but the Samaritans believed in the Church of England and worshipped in groves of oak, therefore the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans.

Titus was a Roman Emperor—supposed to have written the Epistle to the Hebrews—his other names was Oates.

Oliver Cromwell was a man who was put into prison for his interference in Ireland. When he was in prison he wrote "The Pilgrim's Progress" and married a lady called Mrs. O'Shea.

Wolsey was a famous general who fought in the Crimean War, and who, after being decapitated several times, said to Cromwell, "Ah, if I had only served you as you have served me, I would not have been deserted in my old age."

Perkin Warbeck raised a rebellion in the reign of Henry VIII. He said he was the son of a prince, but he was really the son of respectable people.

The heart is a comical shaped bag. The heart is divided into several parts by a fleshy partition. These parts are called right artillery, left artillery, and so forth. The function of the heart is between the lungs. The work of the heart is to repair the different organs in about half a minute.

Explain the words fort and fortress: A fort is a place to put men in, and a fortress a place to put women in.

Hydrostatics is when a mad dog bites you. It is called hydrophobia when a dog is mad, and hydrostatics when a man catches it.

TRIED BY JURY.—A French surgeon at Smyrna wishing to procure a stork, and finding great difficulty, on account of the extreme veneration in which they are held by the Turks, stole all the eggs out of a nest and replaced them with those of a hen. In process of time the young chickens came forth, much to the astonishment of the storks. In a short time the male went off, and was not seen for two or three days, when he returned with an immense crowd of his companions, who all assembled in the place and formed a circle, taking no notice of the numerous spectators which so unusual an occurrence had collected. The female was brought forward into the midst of the circle, and after some consultation the whole flock fell upon her and tore her to pieces; after which they immediately dispersed and the nest was entirely abandoned.—*Cassell's Family Magazine*.

YOU SEE.—An exchange attributes this statement to a professor of chemistry, who was explaining why an experiment had failed: "As you see, gentlemen, at present you see nothing; why you see nothing, you will see directly."

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RUSSIAN SNOW-SHOEING.—The Russian snow-shoe has nothing in common with the Canadian *raquette*, but is a long, thin strip of well-seasoned birch wood, about seven feet long by four inches wide, curving upwards like a skate in front, and with a slight longitudinal groove along the centre of the under surface, which gives a grip on the snow when going up-hill. It is fastened to the foot by a leather strap passing over the toe, and a birch-bark withy round the heel. On these shoes the Olonetz peasant almost lives during the winter,—shooting down the steepest hills, scaling the most difficult slopes, and traversing the thickest and most broken forest with an ease that seems well-nigh miraculous. Running, or rather skating, on snow-shoes in an open and hilly country, with a slight crust on the snow, is one of the most exhilarating forms of exercise possible. The work falls chiefly on the muscles of the back and thighs, the shoe being allowed to work freely from the ball of the foot, but not lifted from the ground. Over the flat, four or five versts an hour is considered good going for a long distance, though on a spurt considerably more can be done. The double shuffle which old Feodor used to develop on occasion filled us with envy and admiration. Snow-shoeing down-hill, however, is the “cream” of the sport. A few quick steps launch you into space, and, bringing your shoes parallel, leaning slightly forward, swaying your body to meet the inequalities of the ground, and guiding yourself with a long stick,—provided with a knob at one end for propulsion against the snow, and a hook at the other end with which you may “hang on” to any handy tree when ascending a hill,—down you shoot with ever-increasing velocity, and a delightful feeling of the absence of all effort, till your momentum dies gradually away on the plain below.

But getting back again is a different matter, and on a slippery slope an awful conviction of impotence comes over the beginner when he pants about half-way up, “blown” with his exertions, and feels that just at the critical point his shoes are beginning to slip from under him, and that he will be carried down again in an ignominious squatting position to the bottom of the hill.—*Temple Bar*.

NAPOLEON'S MOTHER.—The relationship between Napoleon Bonaparte and his mother, the Mme. Mère of imperial times, was peculiar. Mme. Letizia, who was thirty-four when her famous son was born, had always been complete mistress of her household. Even when her son was emperor and his word was law, willing as she might have been in public to do him honor, in private she insisted on the privileges of her motherhood. Baron Larrey, in his historical essay, writes, “One day there was a family meeting, and Napoleon gave his mother his hand to kiss; but Mme. Mère moved aside the proffered hand. Napoleon then took his mother's hand and kissed it, and she said to him, ‘Sire, you know quite well that in public I must treat you with due respect, because I am your subject; but in private I am your mother.’”—*The Argonaut*.

A MISTAKE ABOUT ZOLA'S POSSESSIONS.—Zola, speaking of the errors of his interviewers, says, “The funniest mistake ever made by any of them was perpetrated by De Amicis, the well-known Italian writer. It was in 1878, when I was living in the Rue Ballu. I received him in my study. In an adjoining room were two puppies, who were playing and barking. De Amicis mistook the yelps of these dogs for children's cries, and he imparted to the world in his interview that I was the happy father of two bouncing babies.”



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A HOP-RANCH IN THE LAND OF THE MOON.—A half-mile or so back of Snoqualmie, in Washington, lies a hop-ranch which is said to be the largest individual industry of its kind in America. It consists of three hundred and twenty acres, from which nearly three hundred tons of hops are gathered annually, and in the picking season a thousand men—many of whom are Indians—are employed. Some forty or fifty Indian girls were at work grubbing. They are a jolly set, these young Chinooks, and their gay laughter is often heard ringing out across the fields. Their bright-colored dresses and headkerchiefs of red and yellow are wonderfully picturesque in the sunlight, and as the nimble creatures dart in and out among the hop-poles the effect is a brilliant kaleidoscope of color.

The location of the hop-ranch is very delightful. It lies on a plateau as level as a billiard-table, and is hemmed in on every side, apparently, with snow-covered mountains, reminding one of "Rasselas" and the "Happy Valley." If the hop-fields are attractive in the early spring, what can be said of them when they are arrayed in living green, when, wet with the morning dew, they sparkle in the snow like fields of diamonds, or in the pale light of the moon become waxen and spectral!

"Uncle Si," that prodigiously cragged mountain three miles away, containing vast mineral deposits, fairly glows with color, and Curley Mountain, fifteen miles distant, marks the location of the Snoqualmie pass.—*California Magazine*.

NOT A LIKENESS.—James Payn, in *The Independent*, apropos of a recent action regarding the accuracy of a portrait, recalls some old stories of sitters who were so desperately ugly that their likenesses were necessarily only caught "in moderation." Such are the persons who, as Madame de Staël expressed it, "abuse a man's privilege of being plain."

One of these exceptionally plain people sat to Nicholson, an honest painter, but so kindly that he thought it only charitable to mitigate the worst squint that ever deformed the human eye. The sitter looked at the finished portrait with a disappointed air.

"I don't know," he said, doubtfully. "It seems to me—doesn't it squint?"

"Squint?" repeated Nicholson. "No more than you do!"

"Well, you know best, of course," returned the man, "but it seems to me to have a queer look about it!"

Mendez, the Hebrew poet, sat to Haydon for a portrait, and told him not to put it in his show-room, as he wished to keep the matter a secret. Haydon, however, could not resist exhibiting the picture to a friend.

"That's Mendez," he said.

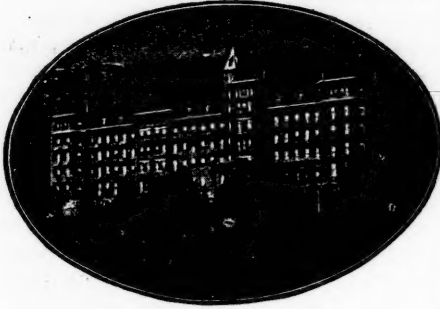
"You don't say so! Well, upon my word, you've not been so fortunate as usual. It's not in the least like him."

"Well," said Haydon, "the fact is, he particularly wished it should not be known."

OWENS'S VERSATILITY.—Owens simulated age with extraordinary accuracy, but he was not unmindful that age has many phases and personal distinctive traits; hence, of the numerous old men he played, no one resembled the other. In Solon Shingle his voice ruralized into eccentricity, and in Caleb Plummer it sobered into pathos. His versatility was wonderful; he could be a young man, a romping lad, or a centenarian with equal fidelity to nature.—*Memoirs of John E. Owens*.

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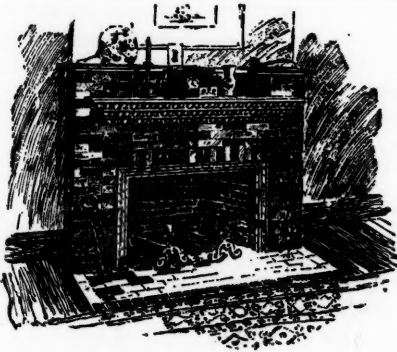
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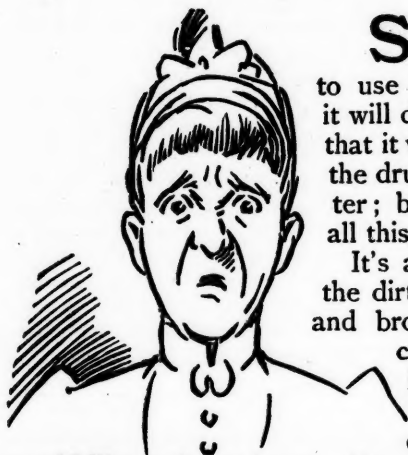
A PITTIABLE SIGHT it is to see an infant suffering from the lack of proper food. It is entirely unnecessary, as a reliable food can always be obtained; we refer to the Gail Borden Eagle Brand Condensed Milk. Sold by grocers and druggists everywhere.

VOL. LI.—43

WASHINGTON IRVING.—Few things in biography are more pathetically suggestive than the records of Irving's last year of life. He had been constitutionally weak from infancy, with delicate lungs, and a tendency to inflammation of the ankles, which often disabled him for either work or society. Latterly, cough, asthma, and heart-disease troubled him, accompanied by sleeplessness, and strange nervous terrors for which he was touchingly apologetic. But through all we see the sweet temper, the intellectual energy, and the gentle, half-melancholy jesting, with which he combated increasing pain and weakness. "I am rather fatigued, my dear, by my night's rest," he replied to a niece's anxious inquiries. He was still at work on his "Life of Washington," and his chief dread was lest his brain might have been overtaxed. "I do not fear death," he said, "but I would like to go down with all sails set." His increasing dread of the night induced him to seize any pretext for sitting up; and he was never, writes his nephew, more delightful than during those long evenings. "All the interesting scenes of his life seemed to pass before him, a thousand anecdotes of persons and things of which we had never heard, related in the most graphic manner and filled with all his old fun and humor." A few months before his death, Irving received a voluminous epistle from a stranger, asking permission to call on him. "Oh, if he could only give me his long wind," groaned Irving, "he should be most welcome."—*Temple Bar*.

DEVOLUTION OF THE LITTLE TOE.—The thumb and great toe of men are two-jointed, while the other fingers and toes are three-jointed. But it has been observed, in the examination of skeletons, that the little toe is occasionally two-jointed, the middle and terminal phalanges having been so united that they can hardly be distinguished. This variation occurs in about thirty-six per cent. of the cases, and usually affects both feet alike, but appears rather more frequently in women than in men. Pressure of the shoes has been assigned as a cause of it, but it has been observed in children under seven years old, and even in embryos as often as in adults, and in circles where tightly-fitting shoes are not worn. Dr. Pfitzner, who has made a special study of the subject, has come to the conclusion that the little toe is in process of degeneration, and that without its being possible to show that it is suffering an adaptation to any external mechanically operating influence. Corresponding to this, certain processes of reduction are going on in the muscular apparatus. The whole phenomenon is of interest, because we are witnessing its beginning, and can certainly predict its outcome in the final reduction of the little toe to two joints.—*Popular Science Monthly*.

ENCOURAGED by the favorable reception of Colonel Richard Malcolm Johnston's "Studies, Literary and Social," the publishers (The Bowen-Merrill Company, of Indianapolis) have brought out a Second Series, uniform with the first. Its contents deal with "Edward Hyde's Daughter," who was married to the Duke of York, afterwards James II.; "Benjamin D'Israeli, the Jew;" "A Characteristic of Sir Thomas More;" "A Martyr to Science" (Roger Bacon); "Some Heroes of Charles Dickens;" "The Extremity of Satire" (in Thackeray's "Vanity Fair"); "Irish Lyric Poetry;" "The Minnesinger and Meistersinger;" "The Audacity of Goethe" (especially in "Faust"); "King Henry VIII.;" and "Celebrated and Common Friendships." These essays form a neat volume of two hundred and forty pages, convenient to the hand and capable of going into the pocket.



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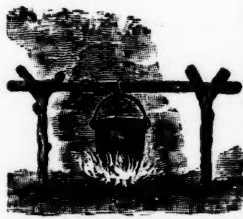
Beware

Peddlers and some unscrupulous grocers will tell you, "this is as good as" or "the same as **Pearline**." IT'S FALSE—**Pearline** is never peddled, if your grocer sends you an imitation, be honest—send it back.

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—*The Methodist, New York.*

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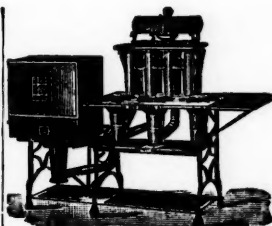
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GLADSTONE AT THIRTY.—Travelling on the Rhine in 1838, our party met and for some days joined Captain Sir George Head, a delightful travelling companion, whose descriptive Canadian contributions were heartily welcomed by the readers of the *Quarterly*. He was at that time suffering from an *extinction de voix*, the result of having been put into a damp bed at an hotel.

On this same tour we also met an English party, consisting of two gentlemen and two ladies, the latter tall, stylish girls, who, with their cavaliers, were thoroughly enjoying this their first acquaintance with the Rhine scenery. One of the gentlemen was Sir Stephen Glynn, the ladies were his sisters, and the other gentleman was Mr. W. E. Gladstone, then a Grand Young Man, whose years, at that time under thirty, might be arrived at by reversing the figures representing those he now numbers. He was tall and dark, and his manner was marked not only by a certain courtesy and elegance, but by that degree of reserve which (more especially in the pre-vulgarized travelling days) one was, and perhaps still is, accustomed to look for in an Englishman of the upper class. The elder of these ladies shortly after became Mrs. Gladstone.—*Gossip of the Century*.

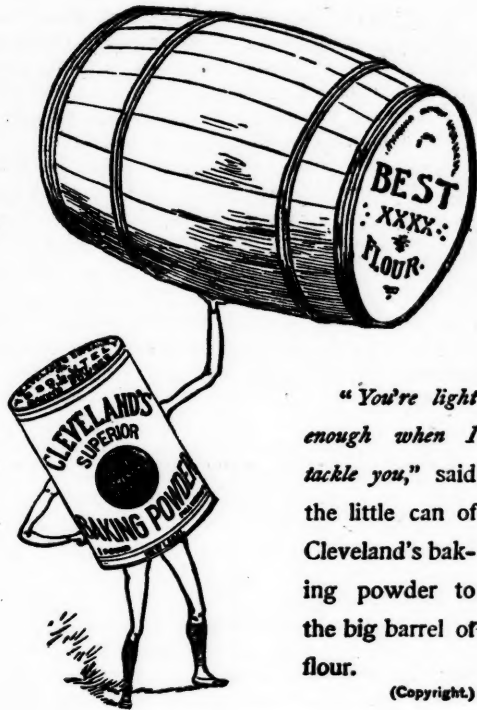
A BROKEN-HEARTED ELEPHANT.—Many are the stories of the remarkable memory of elephants, but perhaps the most extraordinary case on record is that recently related of a shrewd exhibitor of trained animals. He announced that on a certain evening one of his elephants would play the Russian Hymn on a piano with his trunk, and when the evening came the tent was crowded to suffocation. Finally four men staggered into the ring, carrying a cottage piano. The elephant was brought in with a great flourish, paraded three times around the ring, and rested before the piano. The audience held its breath. The elephant touched the key-board with his trunk, and suddenly was seen to tremble with excitement. Trumpeting with rage, he rushed from the arena.

Then there was a great bustling of employees, and the proprietor and the keeper retired, apparently for consultation. Finally the former reappeared.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he said, "I regret extremely that this most wonderful performance of our evening's entertainment has been spoiled. The animal, as you saw, had been carefully trained, and entered the ring with the intention of performing upon the piano as usual. But, ladies and gentlemen, what were his feelings when he recognized in that key-board the tusks of his long-lost African mother! He was overcome with emotion, and, as you saw, fled weeping from the ring. So completely is he unnerved that he will be unable to appear again this evening. Thanking you for your kind attention, I suggest, ladies and gentlemen, that the band play instead the Russian national anthem," which the band proceeded immediately to do.—*Harper's Young People*.

A COURTLY REPLY.—One day as Sir Isaac Heard was with George the Third, it was announced that his majesty's horse was ready to start for hunting. "Sir Isaac," said the good monarch, "are you a judge of horses?" "In my younger days, please your majesty," was the reply, "I was a great deal among them." "What do you think of this, then?" said the king, who was by this time preparing to mount his favorite, and, without waiting for an answer, added, "We call him Perfection." "A most appropriate name," replied the courtly herald, bowing as his majesty reached the saddle, "for he bears the best of characters."—*The Argonaut*.

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and
sure.



*"You're light
enough when I
tackle you,"* said
the little can of
Cleveland's bak-
ing powder to
the big barrel of
flour.

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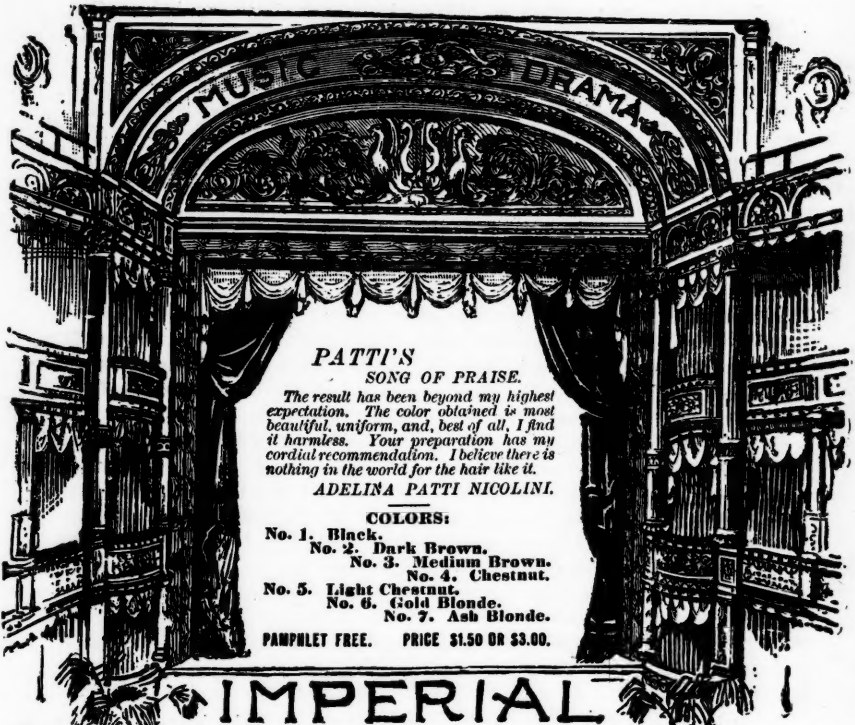
GENUINE GUYOTS.—The great value of advertising is very effectually found in the marvellous increase which has been experienced in the demand for the most notable of all suspenders now manufactured, the genuine Guyots. When Ostheimer Brothers were appointed sole representatives for the United States and Canada, they brought their own advanced methods of doing business to the front, and convinced Mr. Charles Guyot that advertising would pay even if the demand was always ahead of the supply. Before the end of the first year the factory had to be enlarged, and since then has been increased three times, and even now the demand is greater than ever, and they are far behind in their orders. Each steamer brings a larger lot of Guyots to our shores, and hundreds of orders are always waiting to be filled on the arrival of the goods. Every pair of genuine Guyots now has a band showing the Guyot trade-marks. At the Chicago Exposition a most elaborate display will be made, and the great advantages of the genuine Guyots fully demonstrated.

AN APOLOGY FROM AGE TO YOUTH.—I am sadly aware that you can accuse me of growing more solitary, more distant, more self-absorbed, and even more forbidding. Most of us, alas and alack! are unbeautiful in decay. Here and there, and there again, we are marked by Time's defacing fingers with the ugliness of age; and whom do those uglinesses not repel? Now, speaking among ourselves, I may say we all know that your father has been one of the unfortunates, not conspicuously so, as again we shall agree, I think, but enough; and that one little physical accident is answerable for a great deal. Of course it has had its effects upon you, this repulsion which is so strangely felt as a personal offence; and, father or no father, he would be naught of a philosopher and much of a fool who dropped into self-pitying pathos over that. And then, mark you, it has had its effect upon me also. I dare say it will surprise you as much as anything in the world could do to learn that in those times I often came down to breakfast quite unhappy on no other account; but, however surprising, it is true. And then upon the ugliness of age came some small infirmities, such as a troublesome loss of memory, a trembling hand for a soup-ladle, which made matters worse; and I, being ashamed of them and unwilling to display them, shut myself out more and more from an intercourse which yet I cannot blame myself for being the first to narrow.

But now, according to information imparted to me by Dr. —, there is soon to be an end of all this muddle of small miseries. And, that being so, I look forward with no earthly trouble but one, and that is, lest you should think of me after I am gone—or, should I rather say, forget me?—as the morose, self-concentrated, curmudgeonly old man that I doubt not you have thought me, and perhaps even fancied that I delighted to be. Appearances are strong against me, it is true; and yet I do assure you that even now, when, already on the pathway out of the city of this life, I turn to look down on it, I hardly know how these appearances could have been avoided. Even if I could have invited you, six or eight years ago, to a consideration of the laws of our nature, which are so much to blame for the alienation of youth and age, little good would have come of it; and the invitation was an impossible one. But there is no risk in placing that consideration before you in this way, to think of when I am gone, and to make it easier for you to believe that your father's later years were not quite discharged of the tenderness which surely you remember in the days when you were little children.—*Macmillan's Magazine*.

THEY WILL HAVE THEIR OWN WAY.—Frances Willard declares that the total amount of force used at any given moment to compress the waists of women by artificial means would turn all the mills between Minneapolis and the Merrimac, while the condensed force of their tight shoes, if it could be applied, would run any number of trains. The amount of energy yearly wasted in attempts to make women not follow the fashion for health's sake would, if it could be concentrated, run not only all the mills but all the trains in the New World.

A BARRISTER tormented a poor German witness with so many questions that the old man declared he was so exhausted that he must have a drink of water before he could say another word. Upon this the judge remarked, "I think, sir, you had better let the witness go now; for you have pumped him dry."—*The Green Bag*.



PATTI'S
SONG OF PRAISE.

The result has been beyond my highest expectation. The color obtained is most beautiful, uniform, and, best of all, I find it harmless. Your preparation has my cordial recommendation. I believe there is nothing in the world for the hair like it.

ADELINA PATTI NICOLINI.

COLORS:

No. 1. Black.
No. 2. Dark Brown.
No. 3. Medium Brown.
No. 4. Chestnut.
No. 5. Light Chestnut.
No. 6. Gold Blonde.
No. 7. Ash Blonde.

PAMPHLET FREE. PRICE \$1.50 OR \$3.00.

IMPERIAL

Imperial Hair Regenerator is the only perfect and safe coloring for the hair; and, in order to test its merits, send sample of hair, and it will be regenerated to any desired shade, free of charge.

IMPERIAL CHEMICAL MFG. CO., 292 Fifth Avenue, New York.

CONSUMPTION CURED.—An old physician, retired from practice, had placed in his hands by an East India missionary the formula of a simple vegetable remedy for the speedy and permanent cure of Consumption, Bronchitis, Catarrh, Asthma, and all Throat and Lung Affections, also a positive and radical cure for Nervous Debility and all Nervous Complaints. Having tested its wonderful curative powers in thousands of cases, and desiring to relieve human suffering, I will send, free of charge, to all who wish it, this recipe in German, French, or English, with full directions for preparing and using. Sent by mail, by addressing, with stamp, naming this magazine, W. A. NOYES, 820 Powers' Block, Rochester, N.Y.

BIRD-MANNA!—The great secret of the canary-breeders of the Hartz Mountains, Germany. Bird-Manna will restore the song of cage-birds, will prevent their ailments, and restore them to good condition. If given during the season of shedding feathers it will, in most cases, carry the little musician through this critical period without loss of song. Sent by mail on receipt of 15 cents in stamps. Sold by Druggists. Directions free. Bird Food Company, 400 North Third Street, Philadelphia, Pa.



THE EXHAUSTLESS DESIRE.—"What I most prize in woman is her affections, not her intellect: the intellect is finite, but the affections are infinite and cannot be exhausted."

It would seem that a writer in *The Arena* had fairly imbibed the meaning of the above quotation. She dwells on "The Woman's Part" in language like the following:

"The hot tears that have been shed by women's sleepless eyes, the prayers their pleading lips have sent up to heaven, their tireless faith that will not despair,—let these tell of the watchful, unwearied impulse of woman's soul, longing to bless and to save. How many a woman has taken some weak or erring but dearly-loved man by the hand and, with eyes looking through and beyond the evils of his present, beholding the *spirit* of him she loves, clean, white, and pure as a little child's, has shown him the true image of himself, as perhaps she alone of all the world can see it, but as He who is 'too pure to behold iniquity' sees it also! And then, setting his feet in the narrow path that leads up and out of the pestilent atmosphere of vice into the beauty of the life she can already discern for him, patiently, untiringly, with a joy no language of even angel tongues can tell, she climbs side by side with him into that beyond of glorious promise which she would never leave him to attain alone.

"Men tire of the sinner who will not repent. If the few attempts they at first make to recall him to a sense of his duty fail, they remorselessly cast him off and leave him to his fate; but woman loves him with a deeper, more cherishing love than ever before, holds him closer to her heart, and echoes the whispering word God speaks to her grieving soul, 'Redemption.'"

IN THE SAME LANGUAGE.—Many great men have written illegibly, and it was suspected that this was the reason that Judge Briefly cultivated a hopelessly bad handwriting.

A hint that ought to have had a good effect was given the judge by a client who called and found that the lawyer had left a note for him.

The client sat down and studied over the note for a while. He could make nothing out of the hasty scrawl. Then he wrote beneath it four or five lines that looked as if they might have been meant for writing, followed by this sentence in a plain hand:

"This is in reply to yours of the 15th."—*Youth's Companion*.

WAGES OF WOMEN IN CALIFORNIA.—According to the report of Mr. John J. Tobin for 1887, the lowest weekly wages given is five dollars, and the highest eleven dollars. Plain cooks receive from twenty-five dollars to forty dollars a month, with board and lodging, and domestic servants from fifteen dollars to twenty-five dollars, with board. In cloak-making the lowest wage is three dollars, and the highest seven dollars and fifty cents, and in shirt-making the lowest is two dollars and fifty cents, and the highest six dollars. General clothing and underwear range from four dollars and fifty cents to six dollars, and other trades average a trifle higher wage than in New England.

"MARY," said Mrs. Barker, "I wish you would step over and see how old Mrs. Jones is this morning."

(In a few minutes Mary returns.) "Sure she's just seventy-two years, seven months, and two days old."—*Life*.

**Perfect
Health,**
Beauty and Comfort for
Mother and Child
are found in
FERRIS'
**Good
Sense**
Corset Waists.



All shapes—
full or slim Busts.
Long or Short Waist.
Buttons front
instead of clasps.
Clamp Buckle at hip
for hose support.

FOR SALE BY ALL LEADING RETAILERS.
MARSHALL FIELD & CO., Chicago, Western Wholesale Depot.
Send for illus. circular to **FERRIS BROS.,** Manufacturers and Patentees,
PRINCIPAL OFFICE: BRANCH OFFICE:
18 Sutter St., San Francisco.

PROVIDENT LIFE AND TRUST CO.
of Philadelphia.

Safe Investments. Low Rate of Mortality. Low Expense Rate.

Unsurpassed in everything which makes Life Insurance reliable and moderate in cost.

Has never in its entire history contested a death loss.

THE great wave of interest in physical culture which is rolling over the world, and the need of regular daily exercise, is evidenced by the introduction of calisthenics in the schools and private homes, as well as the numerous athletic clubs and gymnasiums in every town.

The "Little Gem Health Exerciser" costs only \$5. It is made by the Caldwell Manufacturing Company, Rochester, N.Y.

AN ELEPHANT'S INTELLIGENCE.—In India domesticated elephants are usually given drink from large wooden troughs filled with well-water by means of a pump, and it is commonly an elephant that fills this trough. Every morning he goes regularly to his task. While visiting a friend at his fine residence in India, a correspondent of a paper saw a large elephant engaged in pumping such a trough full of water.

"In passing," the writer says, "I noticed that one of the two tree-trunks which supported the trough at either end had rolled from its place, so that the trough, still elevated at one extremity, would begin to empty itself as soon as the water reached the level of the top at the other end, which lay on the ground.

"I stopped to see if the elephant would discover anything wrong. Soon the water began to run off at the end which had lost its support.

"The animal showed signs of perplexity when he saw this, but, as the end nearest him lacked much of being full, he continued to pump.

"Finally, seeing that the water continued to pass off, he left the pump-handle and began to consider the phenomenon. He seemed to find it difficult to explain. Three times he returned to his pumping, and three times he examined the trough. I was an absorbed looker-on, impatient to see what would be done.

"Soon a lively flapping of his ears indicated the dawning of light.

"He went and smelled of the tree-trunk which had rolled from under the trough. I thought for a moment that he was going to put it in its place again. But it was not, as I soon understood, the end which ran over that disturbed his mind, but the end which he found it impossible to fill.

"Raising the trough, which he then allowed to rest for an instant on one of his huge feet, he rolled away the second supporting log with his trunk, and then set the trough down, so that it rested at both ends on the ground. He then returned to the pump and completed his task."

THE NEED OF LIGHT.—On the reopening of an old mine at Bangor, California, a few months ago, flies were found in a dry slope connecting two shafts, all white except the eyes, which were red, and a white rattlesnake was killed. The animals had lived in the dry passages, where they had been supplied with air but not with light. A few of the flies, exposed to light in a glass case, recovered their proper color within a week.—*Popular Science Monthly*.

DICKENS AND SENTIMENT.—The modern judgment against Dickens is, not that he lacked feeling, but that he was superabundant in it; that his free and ready emotions sometimes overmastered him and got portrayed, in his writings as in his own consciousness, in terms too high-wrought and emphatic. That he was a man of warm and generous disposition, a kindly man through and through, no one at all acquainted with either his works or his life should wish to dispute. But the very fact that he was this is suggestive of that emotional temperament which, the contention is, he could not always keep under due control. Intemperance of the sort imputed to him is not uncommon in literature, and in literature of a very high order. It makes what we call the sentimentalists, of whom Mr. Lowell ventures to decide that even Burke was one. Men seemingly the least prone to it by nature have lapsed into it for moments, especially when writing under insufficient inspiration, as all who ever write sometimes do write.—*Scribner's Magazine*.

SOME WISE SAYINGS ARE



"Great designs require great consideration.
Gone eye-witness is better than ten hear-says.
One little and often fills the purse.
Little and often fills the purse.
Diligence is the mistress of success.
Deserve success and you shall command it.
Use not to-day what to-morrow may want.
Spare superfluities to provide necessities.
Truth never fears a rigid examination."

But the wisest of all is—USE

GOLD DUST

WASHING POWDER

and thereby save Time, Strength and Money.

MADE ONLY BY

N. K. FAIRBANK & CO., Chicago,

St. Louis, New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Montreal.

"BURMAH differs from most Eastern countries in the absolute freedom accorded to women," says Colonel J. G. B. Stopford in *The English Illustrated Magazine*. "There is no seclusion in harems; a girl marries whom she pleases, and retains her own property even in the case of a divorce. She often takes the leading part in the management of a business, and is valued for her cleverness."

A HOLY OIL.—The love of the marvellous in the thirteenth century was not less remarkable in this age than in those which had preceded it. In the old French account we read of new wonders in Palestine not mentioned before, and of the Sinai Convent we learn that "There lies Saint Catherine, virgin and martyr, in a very fair marble tomb, which tomb is so holy that a sort of oil from it heals many ills, and the grace of God is shown, in that many wild beasts, which are on that mountain, live on nothing save by licking the tomb of my lady Saint Catherine, and by the manna which falls on the mountain."

At Tortosa also was now shown St. Luke's portrait of Our Lady, and at Sardenai, a Syriac monastery on a rock north of Damascus, was the miraculous image of the Virgin which distilled oil from its breast. By special treaty the Templars were allowed to visit the shrine and collect the oil, which was in high repute and sold for a great price in Europe. It is often mentioned in the inventories of churches in France as one of the treasures of the church.—*Edinburgh Review*.

GARRICK'S HUMOR.—When George III. was visiting Stonehenge with his family and suite, during a summer tour in the southwest of England, David Garrick, who happened to be at Salisbury, having ridden over for the sake of showing himself in the royal *cortege*, had taken up his position on horseback as near as he could to the king. Having dismounted for a moment to tighten the saddle-girth, his horse became restive, and, escaping from his hold, ran away. Garrick hereupon cried out, with much humor,—

“A horse! A horse! My kingdom for a horse!”

This exclamation in the great actor's unmistakable tones did not escape the royal ear, and, while it astonished most of the by-standers, who failed to recognize its point, the king at once remarked,—

“That must be Garrick. See if he is not on the ground.”

The dismounted monarch of the stage was immediately conducted to his majesty, who, after joking with him on the vagaries of his nag, complimented him on his readiness as a wag, shown by the aptitude of his quotation, adding, amiably, that his delivery of Shakespeare could never pass undiscovered.—*“Gossip of the Century.”*

AN INTERESTING SEARCH.—“Please, mister, can I see your City Directory?”

“No. I can't be bothered by little boys coming into my store. What do you want to find in it?”

“I ain't got no fodder and no mudder, an' I'm lookin' for some bloke to adopt.”—*Chicago News.*

PATRIOTIC.—Various stories are told of Americans abroad and their boasting of the glories of their own country. Perhaps the most extravagant story of this kind is told of three American students in Paris who celebrated the Fourth of July by a little dinner.

Before they separated, the toast of “The United States” was proposed, and was responded to as follows:

“Our glorious land, bounded on the north by the British possessions, on the east by the Atlantic, on the south by Mexico, and on the west by the Pacific.”

The second student, in patriotic fervor, amended the toast in the following language:

“Here's to our glorious country, bounded on the north by the north pole, on the south by the south pole, on the east by Europe, and on the west by Asia.”

The third student rose and remarked, “While you're giving a toast, why not give a good one? I propose a toast to the land of the free and the home of the brave, bounded on the north by the Aurora Borealis, on the south by the precession of the equinoxes, on the east by primeval chaos, and on the west by the day of judgment.”

They drank the toast in silent approval of this tribute to their native land.

MAMMA (reprovingly, on Sunday).—“You told me you were going to piay church.” Little Dick.—“Yes'm.” Mamma.—“Then I'd like to know what all this loud laughing is about.” Little Dick.—“Oh, that's Dot and me: we're the choir.”—*Good News.*



Four Hundred years of American Advance.

INVENTIVE ingenuity has seldom had so large a reward held out to it as that which has been busied for years with the perfection of such machinery as would be able to utilize every part of those plants which have become valuable factors in our national commerce, and thereby prevent an expensive waste of material such as crude and inadequate machinery always entails. In this way, jute, hemp, and flax each in turn taxed inventive research, until as a result the intricate and marvellously perfect machines were created which to-day turn every serviceable part of these plants into a fruitful source of private and national revenue.

The enormous cotton-production of our Southern States had from time immemorial been robbed of one of its most lucrative products, in the waste of the cotton-seed, simply because to the *ante-bellum* planter cotton alone yielded so large a revenue that he cared nothing for the "oily pod," as it was called. But as the cost of labor increased on the plantation, and as the richness in oil of the seed became better known and understood, a new and valuable source of income suggested itself to the planter. Under the stimulus of the knowledge of its value, inquiries led to inventions for means to coin this despised seed into dollars. Year succeeding year has seen the oil-extracting processes improve upon one another, until now cotton-seed oil in its various manufactured forms has become a household, culinary, and hygienic necessity.

A large portion of the crop of American cotton-seed is utilized by the American Cotton Oil Company in the manufacture of those products for which its subordinate departments have become famous,—Cottolene, on the one hand, made by the Messrs. N. K. Fairbank & Co., and Providence Pure Salad Oil, which has been made famous by the Union Oil Company of Providence, R.I. The American Cotton Oil Company has naturally a large number of subsidiary departments under its control, which manufacture in a marketable shape the very many products which cotton-seed oil has been made to yield. The total annual output of this far-reaching corporation aggregates millions of gallons annually in cotton-seed oil alone, of which a very large part is exported to England, France, Belgium, Spain, Germany, Italy, and Australia, where it is often made to masquerade as the purest of olive oil.

The standard and uniform purity of cotton-seed oil challenged investigation and research for the discovery of other uses to which it might be put, and, while the results of these investigations yielded numberless new articles of commerce, not one approached in importance the product now known as Cottolene. It is an absolutely perfect and tasteless substitute for the best refined

lard. Retaining as it does the pale yellow color of the oil itself, Cottolene resembles in that respect the rich color of pure butter before it has been doctored with so-called "improvers."

Sweet, and of the consistency of lard, Cottolene contains nothing but clarified cotton oil mixed with the finest beef-suet. While it is rich, it has absolutely none of the objectionable greasy properties of lard, and consequently it has proved a grateful addition to the kitchen necessities, as well as a wholesome substitute for unwholesome lard.

The manifold uses to which cotton-seed oil may be applied, and the valuable properties which it possesses, are only just beginning to be understood and valued, and its many-sided sources of revenue yearly add numerous highly valuable articles to our commerce. Cotton-seed furnishes the oil, which in turn is made into Cottolene, salad oil, and innumerable articles of trade. The residue furnishes "cake," and this is fed as meal to cattle, for fattening purposes. The refuse of the mills furnishes in turn the fertilizer for the next coming cotton crop.

In other words, IT IS POSSIBLE to eat your *pie* and have it too. Practical nineteenth-century American ingenuity is just a trifle too much for olden-time platitudinous proverbs.

The great secret in the economy of power and in the saving of the machine which generates that power lies not only in the perfect adjustment of all the parts, such as the smoothness and trueness of the driving-rods, but in the employment of such material for packing as will adjust itself firmly and closely around those parts where it is desired to prevent a useless and hurtful waste of steam.

Useless in so far that it is simply a waste of power and heat; hurtful in that a leakage of that kind results in sloppy surroundings, which invariably entail rust and decay, and engender, in their turn, wastefulness, slovenliness, and carelessness on the part of the engineer. Above all other parts of a manufacturing concern, the machinery department and the boiler-rooms should be the study to which the principles of economy should be applied; but by that I mean to imply an economy which is best observed in making use only of such oils, packings, belting, and other necessities as through merit have earned for themselves the reputation of being the best.

The best material is always the cheapest in the long run, and while, for obvious reasons, this rule is not always carried out by those who are in charge of the engine-rooms, the careful manufacturer does not leave the choice of packing, for instance, to his engineer alone, but uses that which has earned for itself a recognized standing, based upon merit.

The Mecca towards which all the manufacturers of machinery and machinery requisites are trending at the present time is the World's Fair at Chicago; and, as I know from a personal interview with the World's Fair managers, hundreds of firms and companies have offered to supply the machinery departments free of cost with all the necessary oils and packings for the valuable privilege of advertising the fact of the use of such donated materials.

But it is to the credit of the engineer in charge of that magnificent mechanical display which the World's Fair will make, that he has not lost sight of the fact that the World's Fair, at least in the mechanical department, will be, above all, the most magnificent display of American brains and ingenuity which has

ever been made. For that reason the use of any but the very best materials in the machinery department would not only invite undesirable criticism, but it might entail serious injury to the main driving power.

The proof of the pudding lies in the eating of it, as this photogravure copy of an order from the chief engineer of the World's Fair, to Mr. O. J. Garlock, of the Garlock Packing Company, at his office, No. 136 Liberty Street, New York, shows.

Requisition No. 1017

Chicago, 9-25-92. 389

THE WORLD'S COLUMBIAN EXPOSITION,

Office of CHIEF OF CONSTRUCTION,
JACKSON PARK.

J. Garlock Packing Co., 34 Franklin

Please furnish for Mechanical Dept.

at

Please quote above Requisition Number.

NO. PIECES	ARTICLES.
12	Bones, 1-4" Garlock spiral packing.
12	" 5-8" "
12	" 1-3" "
12	" 6-8" "
12	" 3-4" "
12	" 7-8" "
12	" 1" "
12	" 1 1-4" "
12	" 1 1-4" "

An itemized Memo for each Dept. MUST accompany delivery of this material. Send invoices and duplicate to Frank J. Mulcahy, Gen. Agent, Jackson Park, Chicago.

Order to place 277 ordered delivery

Ship to

By

Ordered by

Approved:

Assistant Chief.

Chief of Construction.

This order came entirely unsolicited from the World's Fair, and for that reason it carries all the more weight with it, especially as the packing was paid for at the regular rates; and the special compliment in this order lies in the fact that the Garlock Packing Company is not an exhibitor at the World's Fair.

Since this order was shown to me, I have made it the subject of inquiry among engineers to whom I look for my mechanical information, and I find that the Garlock Elastic Ring Packing, Special Water Packing, Sectional Ring Packing, Spiral Packing, and Flange Packing are considered the very best of their kind manufactured in this country. I am told that their wearing power and resistance to heat are phenomenal, and that the heat of the engine exercises only a beneficial effect, in that it renders them even better adapted to spring up snug without pressure, while at the same time they yield readily to the pressure from the cylinder.

So far as I can find out among engineers, the Garlock packing—which, by the way, is made at Palmyra, New York, and Rome, Georgia, with branch offices in Chicago, Philadelphia, Pittsburg, Omaha, St. Louis, and New York City—is the only packing which is thoroughly tested for the intense heat of the stuffing-box; and, as it will not blow out or harden, melt or gum on the rod, it is naturally considered economical, reliable, and enduring,—three qualities which combine all that is required of any material by the careful manufacturer.

I saw the actual working of the Garlock Sectional Ring Packing, and found it to be, as was explained to me by the engineer, positively automatic, the bands holding the packing in the box, while the pressure from the cylinder forced the sections together, and, as a consequence, there was absolutely no waste or escape of steam, water, or gas.

Nine years ago, Mr. Garlock struggled along in Palmyra on the munificent capital of two hundred and thirty dollars. To-day I am assured that the Garlock Packing Company is one of the leading companies of its kind in this country. If that is not the best commentary on American pluck and perseverance, then I do not know where a better can be found. *Verb. sup.*

As formerly all roads led to Rome, so to-day do they lead to New York, the largest and most important port of entry on the American continent. The crowded docks on her river-fronts and the thousands of incoming and outgoing steamers and railway-trains are a striking introduction to the stranger to the hustling spirit of the live American. The net-work of railroads which centre in and about New York City is simply marvellous in its perfect proportions; but the road which more nearly interests New-Yorkers is that one which they use the most frequently in travelling to and fro between their suburban homes and the metropolis.

New York to-day offers permanent homes only to the wealthy, and as a consequence the larger percentage of her business men and their employees are compelled to establish their homes in the near-by suburbs.

Water, gas, electric lights, churches and schools, smooth, hard, macadamized roads, handsome railway-stations, and, last of all, good train-service, are what have made the suburban homes on the New Jersey Central Railroad, from Greenville to Somerville, pre-eminently popular.

The so-called "Suburban Section" of the Central Railroad lies within thirty-six miles of New York City, and is healthful to a degree. Charming villages, beautiful rivers, tempting coves and bays, as well as a picturesque spur of the Blue Ridge Mountains, offer within this short distance of New York the most healthful, delightful, and charming locations for homes. For the romantic and patriotic, the ground covered appeals directly to the imagination, as almost every foot of it is historically associated with the immortal George Washington.

The "Greenville Section," a short four and one-half miles from the metropolis, fronting on New York Bay, offers the first bit of cool and pleasant home ground, and, as it is part of Jersey City proper, it possesses all city advantages. Leaving Greenville, there is Bayonne, a city of twenty thousand enterprising people, thousands of whom do business in New York. Bergen Point, famous for its beautiful homes, has recently been annexed to it. Elizabeth, with its forty-five thousand inhabitants, scarce needs mention, any more than Newark, or any of the other large cities lying within this desirable section of New Jersey.

In turn there are Elmora, Roselle, Aldine, Cranford, Netherwood, Westfield, Scotch Plains, Plainfield, Evona, Dunellen, Bound Brook, Somerville, and other beautiful towns, on which the New Jersey Central Railroad prides itself, and of which the citizens who live there boast. Whether travelling along shore or inland within this section, the bracing salt-water air, tempered more or less by distance from the shore, is always present with its recuperative and health-giving ozone as a treat for the overworked and tired city workers.

THE TRANSLATION OF A SAVAGE.

BY

GILBERT PARKER,

AUTHOR OF "THE CHIEF FACTOR," "PIERRE AND HIS PEOPLE,"
"MRS. FALCHION," ETC.

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